



THOMAS BRADBURY.

T. Gilson pinxit.

G. Kneller sculp. 1705.



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THE
MYSTERY
OF
GODLINESS,
Consider'd in
LXI. SERMONS.

WHEREIN

The DEITY of CHRIST is prov'd upon
no other Evidence than the *Word of*
GOD, and with no other View than
for the *Salvation of Men*.

In Two VOLUMES.

By THOMAS BRADBURY.

Jer. xv. 15, 16. *Know that for THY SAKE I have suffer'd
Rebuke. Thy Words were found, and I did eat them, and thy
Word was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of my Heart, for I am
called by THY NAME, O Lord God of Hosts.*

VOL. I.

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T O T H E
CONGREGATION

A T
FETTER-LANE,
AND

Those who attend the Lord's - Day's
Evening Lecture at *Salter's-Hall*.



T H E doctrine of the ever blessed
Trinity was never known (till
very lately) to be matter of de-
bate among Protestant Dissen-
ters. Our Fathers universally
own'd it with reverence and a godly fear;
and the generation who have risen up to de-
ny it, appear to act from a new spirit, as
well as upon a new scheme; as if that
which had always the chief place among
articles of faith, was now to be lifted up

in scorn, and pursued with banter instead of argument. I shall have no regard at present to the ungenerous oppositions that have been made to the cause by exclamations about charity, reviling confessions, and making a subscription to the faith, which has been the constant practice of ministers ever since the reformation, to be a brand of infamy. 'Twas found the shortest way to amuse the world, and divert 'em from the only question they had before 'em, viz. whether the doctrine, as we have own'd it, is reveal'd in the Bible or no. 'Tis a great deal easier to load an opinion with the hard names of persecution, creed-making, and imposition, than to prove that it is an error.

We have endeavour'd that our faith may spread abroad, to be seen and read of all men, in a wellknown confession; that "There
 " there is but one only the living and true
 " God; and, that there are three Persons in
 " the Godhead, the Father, Son, and holy
 " Ghost; and these three are one God, the
 " same in substance, equal in power and
 " glory.

The proposition is complex, and can either be defended or baffled, no other way than by taking the several doctrines apart, which are plainly these five.

I. That there is but one only the living and true God. This we affirm, not only upon the principles of reason, but that greater light that rules the church, the written Word.

The PREFACE.

V

Word. Therefore the charge of Tritheism, or owning of three gods, would have been spar'd by any but such as have a contempt of modesty, against those who confess no more than one. Under this glorious name of God we mean "a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." And as this description belongs to the Most High alone, so we dare give the title (in that sense) to none besides him.

II. Another branch of our confession is, that there are three Persons in the Divine Nature; Father, Son, and holy Ghost. These are plainly distinguish'd; the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Spirit. The liberty that some take to wrangle about the manner of the difference, whether it is specific or numerical, only shews a vanity that would be wise, as if they thought to make an experiment whether God is incomprehensible. 'Tis enough for us, that the Scripture mentions neither more nor fewer than three. We add, that these three are one God. This is to be prov'd in parts, and therefore the next proposition is,

III. The Father is reveal'd in his own book under these glorious titles.

IV. The Son, and

V. The holy Ghost are declar'd in the names, attributes, operations and honours, which we read of as arguments of eternal power and godhead.

The PREFACE.

Whether any of these doctrines are false or no, ought to be tried by taking it asunder from the rest. But if they are all true, that is, agree to the language of the Bible, then the general article is a fair conclusion from the whole, that these three are the same in essence, and equal in power and glory.

'Tis the fourth of these propositions that I have consider'd in the following sermons: First, As a reveal'd truth. Secondly, As an awful mystery. Thirdly, As an argument of practical holiness.

1. *In proving the truth, that Christ, equally with the Father and holy Spirit, is the supreme God, I have honestly given a reason of the hope that is in me, by searching the Scriptures daily whether the things are so or no. The opinions of Fathers, councils, divines of all sorts, and indeed the whole body of the faithful, from Egypt even until now, has been well collected by others; but you know, I have us'd none of these arguments, tho' I always read with pleasure by what a great cloud of witnesses we are encompass'd; nor can I think it very modest that they who have obtain'd so good a report thro' faith, should be treated with contempt by such as are far from being superior to 'em in learning or holiness. However, you are my witnesses, and so may the whole world be now, that I have pleaded no authority but that of Scripture. As I read, I believe; as I believe, so I speak. I*
can

can affirm, as Mr. Chillingworth did, that THE BIBLE, THE BIBLE is the rule of my religion, and of all that I either think or say about the Divinity of Christ. And I fear the memory of that great man is like to suffer, who was known so much to cry up the Bible when the memoirs of his life are furnish'd by those who cry it down. This doctrine is not maintain'd upon a scanty revelation; you will see, that the evidence for it is not confin'd to two or three texts, but flows in all the stream of Scripture; as you will find by a large collection at the end of these Sermons, which if carefully read, will have their weight in proving the Divinity of Christ, and the mystery of godliness.

2. This I have also consider'd as a mystery. 'Tis the familiar and darling word of the holy Spirit, and therefore to treat it with contempt is talking without book. I found, that in this part of my work, I was come to the main pinch of the question; whether God has ever told us things that we could not have discover'd without revelation, and that we cannot explain and comprehend with it; and if he has done so, whether we ought not to believe him upon his own word?

3. 'Twas a thing of the greatest weight with me, that this is a doctrine of godliness. It appears so both in the book of God, and in the lives of men. Charity, humility, devotion,

tion, and universal benevolence, are not impair'd by a belief of the Trinity ; and, as we find by experience, they never grow upon an opposition to it, they are not Arian plants, as far as I can either hear or see.

I hope as the providence of God led me into this subject, so his good Spirit has carried me thro' it. The sermons have been of service to myself, and to many of you that heard 'em ; so that whilst I was imparting to you this spiritual gift, I have been establish'd together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. I have given some account of my preaching upon this text in the last sermon, and therefore I shall say no more in this preface upon that head.

I have endeavour'd to make the reader's work as easie as I could, by distinguishing the particular design of every sermon with a capital word in the running title. Thus, when I'm proving the Deity of Christ, you'll find it in those parts of the discourse where the word GOD is so printed. When the doctrine is expos'd to our adoration and wonder, 'tis consider'd as a MYSTERY, and the application you will meet with, when it's urg'd as an argument of GODLINESS.

*I have heard the defaming of many since my zeal for this doctrine convinc'd 'em I was not to be brought into their measures, either to bury the truth, or to betray it. But some of you God has made to differ, by setting home upon your hearts the arguments
that*

that were so uneasie to them. They went out from us who were not of us, and by their going out it is manifest they were not all of us; but this vacancy has been more than fill'd up by several whom these very sermons were a means of bringing into our church, which had been a stone of stumbling to others. To those that perish Christ is foolishness, but to them who are sav'd, He is the wisdom and power of God.

I have known what it is, as many of you can remember, to be lampoon'd in pamphlets, bely'd in news-papers, threaten'd by great men, and mobb'd by those of the baser sort, for the British liberty, and the Hanover succession. And if I'm to run the same round over again for the commonwealth of Israel, and the King of kings, I shall think, as Dr. Owen saith, "It is no small honour
"to be reproach'd by men given up to a spirit of railing and reviling; and no person
"of sobriety will contend against those who
"reject with scorn the eternal Deity of the
"Son of God, and the satisfactory atonement he made for the sins of men." *Doctrine of the Trinity vindicated*, p. 145.

I can say upon this argument, what one, whom both the grace of God, and the wrath of man have made eminent in the christian world. His last will and testament gives such an evidence of the witness he had within himself, that if I might but feel his joys, I could be content to succeed him in all the reproaches

reproaches that were pour'd upon him from Popish and Socinian malice.

*" * I profess, as he saith, according to the
 " measure of God's favour to me, that I
 " have design'd both from the pulpit and
 " the press, to deliver his pure and uncor-
 " rupted word. And I also aver, that in
 " all my disputes with the enemies of the
 " Gospel, I have us'd no crafty or deceitful
 " methods, but gave myself up to an honest
 " and open defence of truth. But, alas!
 " my study and zeal (if it's fit to be call'd
 " so) was so faint and languid, that I con-
 " fess myself a wanting in many things that
 " were suitable to that noble cause.*

** Profitetur, me sedulo pro modo gratiæ & benignitatis qua Deus erga me usus est, operam dedisse, ut cum in concionibus, tum etiam in scriptis pure ac caste verbum ipsius prædicarem, & fideliter sacram ipsius scripturam interpretarer. Testor etiam ac profiteor, me in contentionibus & disputationibus omnibus, quæ mihi cum hostibus Evangelij habendæ fuerunt, nullis præstigijs, nullis malis artibus & sophisticis usum esse; sed candide ac sincere in veritate propugnanda versatum esse. Verum, hei mihi! studium illud meum & zelus (si hoc nomine dignus est) adeo remissus & languidus fuit, ut innumera mihi ad munus meum præclare fungendum defuisse fateor.*

To this declaration in his last will, I will add what he does in some of his last words to the magistrates and ministers of Geneva.

*" * As to the doctrine which you have heard from me, I profess that I did not take it up in a hasty dubious way, but taught with sincerity the word of God: and had I acted otherwise, I should have had as many fears of his anger, as I now have hopes that my work in preaching has not displeas'd him. Therefore I take the greater liberty to declare before God and you, that I make no doubt but Satan, after his old way, will raise up wicked, unstable, and giddy men to corrupt the sincere doctrine that I have deliver'd among you.*

** Quod ad doctrinam attinet quam ex me audistis, testor me non temere neque incerto, sed pure ac sincere verbum Dei mihi concreditum docuisse, cujus iram alioqui tam scirem huic capiti meo jamjam imminere, quam certus sum meos in docendo labores ei non displicuisse. Idque coram Deo & vobis eo libentius testificor, quod minime dubitem Satanam prout consuevit, improbos, leves, vertiginosos denique homines corrupendæ quam ex me audivistis, sinceræ Doctrinæ excitaturum.*

CALVINI VITA.

Thro'

Thro' the Divine goodness, I can make this reflection on that ministry that I have receiv'd ; and tho' innumerable follies have easily beset me, for which I desire to be humbled, yet for the space of above eighteen years in which I have been a Pastor, and twenty years of my service in the evening-lecture, I have never either denied a truth that appear'd evident to ME, or shammi'd one that I thought useful to YOU.

I recommend both you and the sermons that are now put into your hands to the blessing of that JESUS for whose sake, and in whose cause so great a part of my life and strength have been spent among you.

And I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me, in your prayers to God for me, that I may be deliver'd from those that do not believe, and that my service may be accepted of the Saints ; that I may be among you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. Now the God of peace be with you all, Amen, *Rom. xv. 30,—33.*

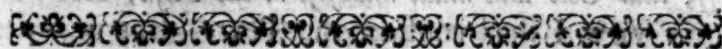


SERMON



SERMON I.

March 30.
1718.



I TIM. iii. 15.

—The Pillar and Ground of TRUTH.



HIS Epistle was writ to Timothy, ver. 14.
that he might know how to behave him-
self in the House of God, which is the
Church of the living God.

In the Old Testament these two
Names are apply'd to different Things. *The House*
of God was the Place he had chosen: first the
Sanctuary, and then the Temple: *The Church* of
God was the People whom he had set apart for him-
self, the Nation which he took out of the midst of Deut. iv.
another; these the Martyr Stephen calls the Church 3. 4.
in the Wilderness. But in the New Testament the Acts viii.
House of God is no other than his Church or 38.
People. He dwells not in Temples made with Hands. — 48.
Every particular Believer is the Temple of the Holy 1 Cor. vi.
Ghost; and a Society of them is that whole Build- 19.
ing that grows together into an holy Temple in the Eph. ii. 21.
Lord.

B

THE

SERM.

I.

The Connexion of the next Words [*the Pillar and Ground of Truth*] has disturbed the World with Volumes of Argument, and Rivers of Blood. Some Divines think, (and I own my self to be of their Opinion) that here the Apostle begins a new Sentence, and what is plac'd at the End of this Verse, should be the Head of the next; and then we shall read it thus; *The Pillar and Ground of Truth is the Mystery of Godliness, which is great without Controversy, that God was made manifest in the Flesh, &c.* In this view I shall consider the Text. But in order to clear the Road, I must take some Notice of the other Opinions that many have contended for; and they are two.

- I. THAT *the Church is the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. Several Protestant Authors have explain'd this Notion with a great deal of Modesty, and say it signifies no more than that Christians in the new Testament have the custody of the Gospel, as to the *Jews* under the Law were committed *the Oracles of God*. Or, to express their beloved Maxim in their own Way, "There is no Truth out of the Church." Others imagine that as the Laws of several Countries us'd to be publish'd on *Pillars* where the People might read 'em, so the Church is to make an open *Declaration* of the Truth that God has reveal'd. 'Tis certain that neither of these Opinions can be denied: The Churches of Christ have the Bible, and they ought to expose it; *from them the Word of the Lord is to sound forth*.
- Rom. iii. 2.
- Luke i. 1.
- 1 Thess i. 18.

But as those Terms [*The Pillar and Ground of Truth*] are a noble Character of something or other, so there are many who, when they apply it to the Church, suppose a great deal more from it than I can. As, *First*, That the Church is to determine what is Truth and what is Error; as if our *Faith* was to stand in the *Wisdom of Men*, and not in the *Power*

1 Cor. ii. 5.

Power of God. Secondly, That the Evidence of any Truth is owing to the Authority of the Church; whereas how great soever the Ministers of the Gospel are, *οἱ δοκῦντες εὐλοῖ*, tho' they are accounted to be these Pillars, *ὁ δὲν διαφέρει*, it makes no odds, *God accepts not the Person of Man*; and, Thirdly, That the Truth it self has no Value, if the Church denies her Concurrence. So that the Belief of the whole Mystery of Godliness shall not deliver a Man from the Brand of Herefy.

Gal. ii, 6.
9.

Thus Men talk who had rather have the Dominion of our Faith than be Helpers of our Joy. A great many other *hard Sayings* are squeez'd out of these Words, but it is evident,

1. THAT by the *Church* in this Text, he does not mean only the Ministers. The Word never once carries that Sense in all the new Testament. *God set in the Church Apostles, Prophets, and Teachers.* And therefore if the *People*, (who certainly are the Church) are the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, I believe 'tis more than the Managers of this Argument ever design'd to prove by it.

1 Cor. ix.
28.

2. 'Tis far from concluding that one Church is the Pillar of Truth to another. If this Character is given of a Church at *Ephesus*, what has that to do with one at *Rome*? But

3. IT is plain from all Reason as well as Scripture, that Truth is the Pillar and Ground of the Church, and not the Church of Truth. *We are built on the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets*; and it is in *Christ* that the whole Building is fram'd together. *We are God's Building*; and they who are wise Master-Builders have laid a Foundation; but that is, and can be, no other than *Christ*. When this Foundation is destroy'd the Church falls to the Ground; *their House will be left unto 'em desolate.*

Eph. xi.
20, 21.

1 Cor. iii.
9, 10.
11.

That which compacts a Society is; that our Hearts

Col. ii. 2.

SERM. are knit together in love, and that which it is raised upon is, the Acknowledgment of the Mystery.

I. If the Churches depart from the Truth as it is in Rev. iii. 4. Jesus, the few that have not defiled their Garments 1 Tim. vi. ought to withdraw, and have no fellowship with the 5. unfruitful Works of Darknes.

II. THERE are some who think that Timothy himself has these great Titles given him. And in Relief to their Opinion they suppose that a Particle is want in the Text; he is exhorted how to behave in the Church *as the Pillar and Ground of Truth.* This Compliment they pay not to his Person, but to his Office. They don't say it of him, because 2 Tim. ii. he knew the Scriptures, and did the Work of an Evangelist, making full Proof of his Ministry, and rightly 15. dividing the Word of Truth: Had these been the Foundations of the Character, we could let the — iii. 15. Names and the Merit go together: But the Reason of their ascribing these noble Titles to Timothy is because he was Bishop of Ephesus, and so the Glories belong not to the Man but to the Chair. They argue that his Opinion ought to be decisive in all Matters of Faith, from the Pre-eminence he had above the rest of the Pastors. And thus are Men setting up the Ambition which the Grace of Grace of God pulls down. It is apparent if this is said of Timothy, he that gives him the Name, Eph. i. 3. gives him Instructions. He besought him to abide — 18. at Ephesus; he committed a Charge to him; he bids — iv. 16. him take heed to himself and to his Doctrine: He has left us no room to imagine, that any Authority is crowded into these Titles, or that it slides down from Timothy to all his Successors, let 'em be never so vile and foolish, to the End of the World. I shall here enquire into three Things:

I. WHAT it is that the Apostle calls the Pillar and Ground of Truth.

2. WHAT

2. WHAT the *Truth* is that will be thus supported.

3. IN what *Sense* we are to understand these Terms of *Pillar* and *Ground*.

1. WHAT is the *Thing* that he calls by these great Names? My Answer to this will lie in a narrow Compass (because I have already discharg'd the Interpretations that some are contending for) by showing you how little Reason there is to understand it of the *Church*, and how much less of *Timothy*; I therefore think that from the End of this Verse he begins a new Sentence. He had show'd him in the former Part of the Chapter what sort of People *Bishops* and *Deacons* ought to be; but still Ver. 2-13. puts him in mind that the main Design of a Minister is to report the glad Tidings of Salvation. The Particle *Kai*, AND, in the beginning of the 16th Verse looks like a Continuation of the former Sentence, rather than a fresh Discourse. I shall therefore understand the Words in their Connexion to what comes after; That the *Pillar and Ground of Truth, and the Mystery of Godliness; that is great without Controversy, is that God was manifest in the Flesh;* &c. By this Account you will see that he speaks of the Christian Religion,

1. In general Characters,

2. In its main particular Branches.

I. THE general Account that he gives us of it, is under three Heads.

1. Tis the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; that all useful Knowledge is rais'd and hung upon it.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING that, it is *mysterious, and greatly so without Controversy.*

SERM.

I.

Ch. I. II.

3. IT has a Tendency to promote and exalt all practical Religion; it is *the Mystery of Godliness*. This, he says in general of *the glorious Gospel of the Blessed God that was committed to his Trust*.

II. IN particular he lets us see that Christianity consists in the Knowledge of *Jesus*; there are six Articles of the great Record.

(1.) HIS Incarnation, He was *manifest in the Flesh*.

(2.) HIS Resurrection, He was *justified in the Spirit*.

(3.) HIS Approbation above, He was *seen of Angels*.

(4.) HIS Method of revealing himself abroad, He was *preach'd unto the Gentiles*.

(5.) THE Success of this Report, He is *belov'd on in the World*.

(6.) HIS Reward for the Service and Suffering of Death, He was *receiv'd up into Glory*.

THESE are so many Parts of the Knowledge we have of him, and these three Characters may be affirm'd of them all; *First*, That they are the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*. Every other Opinion must have all its Weight laid upon these, be consistent with them, and continually referr'd to 'em. *Secondly*, There is a *Mystery* in every one of these. You may call the whole a Chain of Wonders. We are surpriz'd as we go along. We could never have known them but by the Revelation of the Spirit, who *searches all Things, yea the deep Things of God*. We may place these Words at the Foot of the whole Account *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only does wondrous Things*. And, *Thirdly*, They are all of a practical Nature. The Person who receives them with a Belief of the Truth, and an Astonish-

Psal. lxxii.

18.

ment

of TRUTH.

7

ment in the Mystery, will find the good of them in a Life of Duty. It is all *according to Godliness*, as that takes in both the *Worship* we pay to God, and the *good Works* by which our Light shines out before Men.

SERM.

I.

Ch. vi. 3.

I begin with the first general Character, of the Christian Religion, and shall give you my Sense of the Words in this Proposition, that

“ THE Doctrine or Report of Christ Jesus
“ which we have in Scripture is the Pillar and
“ Ground of Truth.”

All other Notions are true or false, trivial or important, holy or polluted, as they are either concern'd with this or remote from it. We want to *know nothing but Jesus Christ and him Crucify'd.*

1 Cor. ii.

2.

Here we may enquire what that TRUTH is which the Apostle speaks of. And you will easily see it must be confin'd to things that *accompany Salvation*, or as it is said in another Place, whatever pertains to the Kingdom of God. This is the *Grace and Truth that came by Jesus Christ.*

Heb. vi. 9.

Acts i. 3.

Joh. i. 17.

There is a *Truth of History* that we take delight in; to know what is doing in distant Countries, or has been done in former Ages: But this is rather our Entertainment than our Concern.

There's a *Truth of Argument*; this is still more engaging; as 'tis the proper Food of our Reason. We have a Power of thinking, trying, judging and approving; these are intellectual Joys, *when Wisdom enters into their Heart, Knowledge is pleasant to thy Soul.*

There's also a *Truth of Conversation*; which is what we call Integrity. This appears with a Beauty to others, and leaves a Calmness in our own Souls. 'Tis a Satisfaction to think that the Persons we deal with are open and hearty to us, but it is

SERM.

I.

more supporting to know that our selves are so to them. An honest Man will have greater Pain in doing one deceitful Action than in receiving an hundred.

Besides these, there are *Truths of Philosophy*, that have no Concern with the Doctrine of Christ Jesus. A Man may either believe or reject them without any Influence on his Religion. It's all one to a Christian whether he thinks the Earth or the Sun moves. But the Truth that our Apostle means is of another kind.

- 1. 'Tis about the greatest Concerns.
- 2. It comes with the fullest Evidence.
- 3. 'Tis always the same.
- 4. 'Tis follow'd with the best Effects.

1. THE whole Bulk of *Truth* that stands upon the Doctrine of Christ Jesus is about the greatest Concerns of humane Nature. Knowledge and Interest are thrown together. To be wise is to be happy. They are our Food. We are *nourished up in the Words of Faith and of good Doctrine; wholesome medicinal Words* *ὡφέλιμα λόγια*. 'Tis *Health to the Soul*.

1 Tim. iv.
6.

—6. 3.

Many of our Studies are bare Amusements; and yet with what an Appetite do we catch at little Probabilities as the Ground of a darling Opinion? and that about things that will make us never the better, whether we be right or wrong? They give no Sweetness to this Life and no Assurance of another. Those learned Men are justly admir'd who have seen the Confusion of the old Philosophy, and drawn out a more likely Scheme. But if they could demonstrate all they say, it rises no higher than to give an Entertainment. They may be sick and poor, vicious and ignorant of God, with all that Knowledge. The *Ephesians* were skilled in *curious Arts, walking in the Vanity of their Mind*; but they were

were darkened in their Understandings, and alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that was in them. Indeed an Acquaintance with the Things of Nature may be improved, as by some great Men it is, to an Admiration at the Works of God; for in Wisdom he has made them all. But those Reflections are no part of the Learning, nor do they always go along with it.

Now the Doctrine of Christianity is to acquaint you with the Method that God has taken for Himself to be glorious, and you to be happy. That you may wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jesus who deliver'd us from the Wrath to come.

You do not read that God was manifest in the Flesh merely to be acquainted with the Story, but that the Love and Kindness of our Saviour towards Man may appear; to shew us how, according to his Mercy, we are saved by the washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. All his Enemies knew that he was made of a Woman, and under the Law, but our Concern in this is to see by what Method we are redeemed from under the Law, and receive the Adoption of Sons.

His being justify'd in the Spirit, the Testimony given to him by the Holy Ghost, is more to us than a Matter of Fact. We believe in God who rais'd him from the dead, and gave him Glory. These are all so many Articles for the Conviction of Sinners, for the quieting of a wounded Conscience, the building up of the Weak, and the drawing on to Sion those that have set their Faces thitherwards, that we being justify'd by his Grace, may have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; in whom we have Access by Faith into the Grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God.

His being seen of Angels, admir'd, ador'd, and obey'd by the Armies of Heaven, is more than a Speculation.

SERM.

I.

Acts xix,

19.

Eph. iv.

17. 18.

Psal. civ.

24.

1 Thess. i,

10.

Tit. iii. 4.

— 5.

Gal. iv. 4.

5.

1 Pet. i. 21.

Rom. v.

1, 2.

SERM.

I.

Psal. xlv. 6.

Heb. i. 14.

Speculation. In their Duty we see our own Happiness; we argue from thence, that *his Throne is for ever and ever*, and that those who worship him will be *ministring Spirits to all the Heirs of Salvation*.

Joh. xx.

17.

Heb. ix. 28.

That he was *preach'd unto the Gentiles* is the Means of bringing this Salvation to us. That he is *believ'd on in the World* is our Comfort, and if we have obtain'd the *like precious Faith*, it is our Life. That he was *receiv'd up into Glory* is a Security to our Hope, for he went *to his Father, and our Father, to his God, and our God*; And *to them that look for him, He shall appear the second Time without Sin, to Salvation*.

Eph. iii. 9.

So that, this is *Truth indeed*, not only evident, but important; Here's a Doctrine contriv'd on Purpose to let Sinners know they are *Prisoners of Hope*, To make all Men see what is the *Fellowship of the Mystery*, that from the Beginning of the World was *hid in God*. That we have our *Κοινωνία, Fellowship* with, and our *Concern* in.

1 Cor. ii.

7.

— 12.

Suppose any ingenious Person has his Head turn'd to Mathematical Studies, he is pleas'd to find what is in the Bowels of the Earth, the Courses of Nature, and the Power of Engines; but, if he sees that by these Things his Estate may be improv'd; if, by that Study, he is capable of draining his Mines, it entertains more than his Curiosity. And so it is here: We do not only speak *the Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, but *the hidden Wisdom that was ordain'd before the World to our Glory*. The Knowledge we have by the Gospel is of *Things, that are freely given to us of God*. We consider his Wisdom, his Truth, his Goodness, and his Justice, as they cause their Glories to shine out in our Redemption, there's no part of this Account but what is to make you easy in a World of Cares, and hap-

by in a World of Light. For this Truth dwells in us, and shall be with us for ever. SERM. I.

2. THIS Truth comes with the greatest Evidence, and that is the Testimony of God himself. We receive it with a Veneration to these two Attributes; First, his Wisdom, that he knows the Truth; and, Secondly, his Purity, that he will tell it. *A God of Truth and without Iniquity, just and right is he; therefore he who believes not, has made God a Lyar, because he believes not the Record that he has given of his Son. But he that receives the Testimony has set to his Seal that God is true.* 2 Joh. 2. Deu. xxxii. 4. 1 Joh. v. 10. Joh. iii. 33.

There can be no greater Reason for assenting to any Proposition than this, that God has said it. *The Words of the Lord are pure Words.* We are to take no Man's Opinion upon Trust; for they may deceive us: We should bring their Reason to the Bar of our own. But in what the Lord saith, there must be an Acquiescence, because his Knowledge receives no Error, and his Truth declares none. *Let God be true and every Man a Lyar, that he may be justify'd in his Sayings.* Don't call it the Subjection and Bondage of our Minds, or the laying aside of Reason. The great Employment of that Faculty is to enquire whether this is a Divine Revelation or no: If it is satisfy'd about that, it has gone far enough. There needs no more; for if I don't believe what I know to be reveal'd, I reproach the Nature of God, who is not a Man that he should lye, and in whom is no Darknes at all. Psal. xii. 6. Rom. iii. 4. Nu. xxiii. 19.

Still all this while, remember I am speaking of that, which, you're satisfy'd, is reveal'd, not what vain Man will call by that Name. No Doctrine of humane Invention has any Concern in this Argument. It may be true, but it has not the Evidence I am now talking of. The Bereans are commended as more noble than those of Thessalonica, because Aet. xvii. 11.

SM.

I.



cause they would take nothing upon Trust from the very Apostles. But then they did not set up their own Reason against a Divine Authority, for *they searched the Scriptures daily, whether the Things were so or no.* If they found the Doctrines in the Scriptures, it was enough; that one thing clos'd up the Mind, they never brought the Opinion down to Reason, or examin'd whether it might be defend- ed that way. The whole Dispute and Enquiry ended in this, that if God had said it, they must receive it. No matter whether it came within the Comprehension of their own Minds or no. They do not set Reason as a Judge upon God, whether he speaks right or wrong. They make no Trial of his Wisdom, or his Truth. The very Exami- nation is profane and impious; it's going beyond the Bounds of Creatures, and *breaking through to gaze.*

Exod. xix.

21.

If there is such a Thing as Revelation, it must be the *highest Evidence* that a Doctrine can ever have. All other Knowledge leaves us short. We make some few Discoveries, and we guess the rest. Observation lays the Ground, and Conjecture builds upon it. That's as far as any Philosophy can go.

Knowledge and Faith are usually thus distinguish'd. We are said to know Things that we either see, or that appear to our own Reason; we *believe* things upon the Testimony or Report of another. Now, 'tis without any Foundation, that People give the Preference to the Opinions we have by Know- ledge, above those that come by Faith; I can be as fully perswaded of the Truth of a Thing by Re- port, as I can by Observation. I have no more doubt, that there is such a Place as *Rome*, than that there is a City called *London*, and yet all the Evi- dence I can have of the former is the Testimony of

of others. I believe it, because Persons tell me so. SERM. I.
This Principle is admitted into all the Business of Life, and shall it have no place in Religion, where the Report comes from a God that cannot lie?

Tit. i. 1.

Methinks the Apostle was aware that this sort of Reasoning would creep into the World, and therefore he lays in for it; *If we receive the Witness of Man the Witness of God is greater, for this is the Witness that God hath testify'd of his Son. He that believes in the Son of God hath this Witness in himself, i. e.* there is something in his Reason that bears him out in his Faith; for he believes it, because God has said it. If I tell you that the Moon is so much less than the Earth, and the Sun so much larger, that the Stars move in such an Orb or Circuit, that the Earth turns round, 'tis very likely these things are true: Probability is the highest that sort of Learning can go. But if ever God had told me any of these Notions, I should have known them better. Well, 'tis upon this Evidence that we say *God was manifest in the Flesh*: What we declare to you is *τὸ μαρτυρεῖν* the Testimony of God. Here are *immutable things in which it is impossible for God to lie*; and in these you have the *greater Consolation who have fled for a Refuge to lay hold upon the Hope set before you.*

1 Joh. v. 9, 10.

Heb. vi. 18.

3. THIS Truth is always the same. There are *divers and strange Doctrines*, but *Jesus is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*. The Degrees of Revelation may vary, as we know they have done. The Discovery of his Purpose towards Man has been as the *shining Light*; it burst out of thick Darkness at first, and when the Eye-lids of the Morning were open, it shone *more and more unto a perfect Day*. But still the Speaker and the Message are the same. He *who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto our Fathers, by the Prophets, has in these last Days spoken to us by his Son.*

Heb. xiii. 8, 9.

Heb. i. 1.

Whc-

SERM.

I.

Gen. iii. 15.

Heb. ii.

14.

— II. 4.

Whether Christ was to be *known* in a Promise, or in Types ; in the Flesh, or in the Spirit, was determined by the several Dispensations Mankind were under. But, that he was to *come* among us, and work out an eternal Redemption, is a Doctrine as old as Paradise. 'Tis no new Discovery, that Mercy was to be glorify'd in making Salvation a Gift, and Justice in making it a Purchase. *Adam* knew this as well as we. When he was told that the *Seed of the Woman should break the Serpent's Head* : 'Tis the same in Substance with what we read afterwards, that *by Death he subdued him who had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil*. A Faith upon these Principles was a long while in the World before what we now call Christianity : By this *Abel offer'd to God a more excellent Sacrifice than Cain* ; not merely by Fear, Love, and Duty, but by *Faith*.

This Perpetuity of an Opinion is what no Philosophy can pretend to. Several Notions that are now received with Credit would have been thought monstrous in former Ages. Nothing can be more opposite than the Systems of our learned Men and those a thousand Years ago, about the Motion of the Sun and the Earth. 'Tis certain in this Case, the Things are the same ; the Sun and the Earth took just that unvaried Course then that the do now ; only People have have got another Way of thinking about 'em. And perhaps following Generations may lay aside our Principles, as we did theirs that have gone before us. Such a floating, rolling, shifting Thing is humane Wisdom.

But in Religion we declare to you *that which was from the beginning*. This Truth has been confessed ever since God had a People in the World, and shall be so to the last Breath of the last good Man that will close the last Age of Time. For though *all Flesh is Grass, and the Glory of Man as the*

1 Joh. i. 1.
1 Pet. i. 24,
25.

he Flower of Grass, it withers and fades away, yet the Word of the Lord endures for ever; and this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.

Some People tell us that the Rules of Church-Government alter; and indeed as far as they are humane, they must do so; for if Men will determine by their own Laws, what is decent or expedient, they should remember that *the Fashion of this World passes away*. But what God has given us is *for ever*. He has made Changes in the Methods of his Worship, but he never made any in the Doctrine of Redemption. Whether he would be served by Sacrifice and Offerings is not to be answer'd without a Distinction: For as we can tell the Time when they were required, so we also know *in burnt Offerings he has no Pleasure*: But it was always true, that Christ should be the Saviour of his People. This was the same Doctrine before the World began, that it shall be after it is ended. For *he was verily fore-ordained before the Foundation of the World unto our Glory, but was manifest in these last Times unto us*. If the old Philosophers were to rise again, they must give their Thoughts a new Cast, and unravel the Schemes which they had laboured with so much Pain and Pleasure too. But if *righteous Abel* was to live among us, his Religion would be just the same with ours; only he must approach to God by a Mediator without a *Sacrifice*, as before he did with one.

1 John i. 1.

4. THIS Truth is attended with the most happy Influence. There is something in the Mind of Man that makes it receive a Notion with Pleasure according to the degree of Evidence. It strikes the Soul as Light does the Eye. But of all Wisdom, that which relates to a future Happiness is the most refreshing as well as the most important. *Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free*. It unbinds the Soul from the Captivity of Nature.

John viii.
32.

Where

SERM.

1.

2 Cor. iii.

17.

John xvii.

17.

Hof. viii. 2.

John xvii.

3.

Eccl. i. 18.

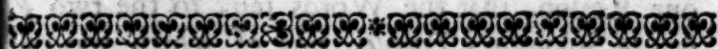
1 Pet. i. 12.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty. God sanctifies us by his Truth, for his Word is Truth. A Conviction of this is like getting out of a Dungeon, Israel shall cry unto me, my God, we know Thee.

INDEED, it's like all other Learning, very mean and insipid, to those that have it not: But when the Entrance of the Word gives Light, it makes wise the simple, it enlarges the Heart, for it is Life eternal to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. This must be an Exception to what Solomon saith, in much Wisdom is much Grief, and he that increases Learning increases Sorrow. The Reason of his Maxim is plain, because the things themselves are *Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*. But when we survey the Love of God towards Men, the Redemption that it presses to, the mysterious Glory that it's folded in, these are things that will hold, when the Creation is dash'd in pieces. And therefore we may look over them with joy: This will be the grand Meditation of Heaven: For the *Sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow are things that the Angels desire to look into*. Therefore an Enquiry into them is bringing the Work of the Presence-Chamber into the outer Rooms, and beginning a little before-hand in that which shall be our Employment for ever.



SER-



SERMON II.

April 13.
1718.



OUR next Enquiry is how we are to understand these Metaphors; when the Doctrine of Christ Jesus is call'd *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. There's a great Variety of Opinions that I meet with upon this Head: For when a lively Fancy is set at work to make the most of an Allusion, we may have Particulars enow.

Some think the Words refer to *the Pillar of Cloud and Fire* which were both a Protection and a Guide to the *Jews* from *Egypt* till they came to *Canaan*. And indeed, that was a Type of our Lord's Presence with his Church to the End of the World, and of the Way that he takes in making known the Truth. He *leads us by his Counsel*, he *keeps us from falling*, and will *present us to himself with exceeding Joy*, as the Monuments of a Care that's past, and the Objects of a Love that continues for ever. The Doctrine of the Gospel answers the End of that moving Pillar, it is a *Wall of Fire* around about us, and the *Glory* in the midst of us. He creates upon every dwelling Place of Mount Sion, and upon her Assemblies, a *Cloud and Smoke by Day*, and the *Shining of a flaming Fire by Night*, for upon all the *Glory shall be a Defence*.

Psal. lxxiii.
24.
Jude 23,
24.

Zech. ii. 5.

Isa. iv. 5.

Others imagine that the Apostle had in his Eye what they call the *Pillar of Coronation*, which stood in the Temple near to the Place where their Kings were crown'd. But here the Sense of the Metaphor comes heavily in, and 'tis with much ado that these Annotators apply it to *the Day of our Lord's Esponsals*, the Day on which his Mother crowned him.

2 Kings xi.
14.

Caat. iii. 11.

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SERM.
II.

1 Kings vii.
21.

Psal. lxxxix.

2.

2 Sam.

xxiii. 5.

Isa. xiv. 32.

2 Tim. ii.

19.

There's another Opinion that looks fairer to our Reason, that the Words refer to the two *Pillars in Solomon's Temple*, one of which was call'd *Jachin*, i. e. *he shall establish*, and the other *Booz*, *in him or in it is my Help*; Either of these Titles may be apply'd to the Interest of Religion, and the Doctrine of the Gospel. By the Articles of Truth it appears, that God has *establish'd his Mercy in the Heavens*, *his Covenant is order'd in all Things and sure*; and in that is our Help; *The Lord has founded Sion*, and the Poor of his People shall trust in it, in that Contrivance. *The Foundation of God stands sure, having this Seal, that he knows them that are his.* This Covenant is all our Salvation and all our Desire.

But, Lastly, some think the Apostle alludes to the Use of Pillars in the *Heathen Temples*, there being a magnificent one at *Ephesus*. On these they writ their Laws, here they painted their Gods, and from hence they expos'd the Images of their great Men. The Doctrines of the Gospel serve to all these Purposes. Here we have our Laws, *The*

Tit. ii. 11.

12. *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil World.* Here also we see as much as we can do of our God,

Acts vii. 48.

—xvii. 25.

2 Cor. iii. 4.

who dwells not in Temples made with Hands, neither is worship'd as though he needed any Thing: The Design of Christianity is to give us the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ. Again, in this Revelation, we have our

Heb. xi. 2.

—vii. 1.

—vi. 12.

Psa. cxii. 6.

Heroes; By Faith the Elders obtain'd a good Report, We are compass'd about with a great Cloud of Witnesses, and are Followers of them who through Faith and Patience do inherit the Promises. Here the righteous are had in everlasting Remembrance. Whenever the Gospel is preach'd, the Things that they have done are spoken in Memorial of them.

But,

But, not to vex the Metaphor, and lose our selves in the Chase of so many Allusions; the Doctrine of Jesus Christ, the Report we have of him, may be call'd the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; as it is the most important of all Truths as it ought chiefly to be contended for, as other Truths are built upon it, and have a Tendency to it, and as it has the best Influence upon the Holiness and Comfort of our Souls.

I. THE Things laid down in the next Verse are the most important of all Truths. *'Tis the Record that God has given us of his Son; This is the Record that God has given to us eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son.* We have all our Concern in them. *This is the true God and eternal Life.* The Question that the Disciples of *John the Baptist* came with to our Lord was the greatest that could ever engage the Thoughts of Men, *Art thou he that shall come, or look we for another?* 'Twas with a View to *God manifest in the Flesh* that the Worthies of the Old Testament took so much Pains in going to the Temple; and were at all that Expence in Journeys and burnt offerings. *This was the Hope of Israel to which the Twelve Tribes instantly serving God Day and Night hoped to come.* For this our Lord came into the World, not merely to explain the Law, and be a *swift Witness* against his Enemies, but to bear his Testimony that God had sent him. *John bare Witness to the Truth, and the Father bare witness of him,* nor could that People have his Word abiding in them, who believed not in him whom he had sent.

You see that his Empire consisted in the Knowledge of this: When he owns himself before *Pilate* to be a King, he adds, *to this End was I born, and for this Cause came I into the World, that I should bear witness to the Truth; every one that is of the Truth hears my Voice.* Whatever he said might be call'd the Truth, for in his

John v.
10, 11.

ver. 20.

Mat. xi. 3.

Acts xxvi.
7.

Mal. iii. 6.

John v. 33.

— 37.

— 38.

John xviii.
37.

SER. M.
II.

Lips was found no Guile, but what he gives that Title to with all this Eminence is the Discovery that he made of *himself*. This is *our Report*; the thing we are to carry abroad. When he pleads his very Miracles, it is *that we may know and believe that the Father*
John x. 38. *is in him, and he in the Father.*

'Tis a Satisfaction to see how the Word and the Providence of God are tallying to one another; that so many Ages have roll'd away between the first Breath of the Promise, and the full Life of the Blessing, and yet it all came right. He brought *Israel* out of Egypt 430 Years after he had promised it to a Day. He restor'd them from *Babylon* 70 Years after the time of their Captivity, and gave them an *expected End*. But the coming of that Lord of *whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write* is the grand Article of his Faithfulness which shall be establish'd for ever: He that receives this Testimony hath set to his Seal that God is true. He is call'd the Consolation of *Israel*, as if they had waited for nothing else. Seeing him was enough. Good old *Simeon* deliver'd himself on that occasion like one who had got his Fill of Life, and had no more to stay for in this World: Now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation, which thou hast prepared before the Face of all People; a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of thy People *Israel*.
Exod. xiii. 41.
Joh. i. 45.
Psa. lxxxix.
Joh. iii. 33.
Luke ii. 25.
ver. 29, 30.
31, 32.

The Period when this happened is called *the Fulness of Time*; as if all things in Nature and Providence had conspired to make that the fittest Opportunity, the *due Time*, according to which, *etia tunc*, he came and died for the ungodly. *Jacob* is thought to place too much of his Affection upon one Son, when he hears that he is Lord of Egypt, *Is Joseph yet alive, it is enough, I will go down to see him before I die*. He uses the same Excess of Language at their meeting: —*xlvi. 30. Now let me die, since I have seen thy Face*; as if he thought his Life was saved for nothing else but this

Inter-

GROUND of Truth.

21

Interview, and that every other Mercy would be flat and low after such an Entertainment. This perhaps might be criminal in him; but there is no Danger in the Case before us. We cannot overdo it in admiring *the Love and Kindness of God our Saviour towards Man.*

SERM.
II.

He speaks of himself as the great Bounty of Heaven.

Tit. iii. 4.

Thus saith he to the Woman of Samaria, *If thou hadst known the Gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living Water.* Every thing was the Gift of God; *Jacob* had own'd that very well to be so many Ages before; but he takes the Name in a Sense that can never be equall'd when it is applied to any thing else, and we may say *Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift.*

John iv. 10.

2 Cor. ix.
15.

2. THIS is a Truth that we are to contend for. *If the Foundations are destroy'd what can the righteous do?*

Psal. xi. 3.

There are several Doctrines that we deduce from these. Some People see the Connexion, and others do not, We may dispute with mutual Forbearance, and be as easy to the Mistakes of our Brethren as we are to their Tempers; but an Error that saps the Foundation, that digs up the Ground of Truth, is not to be endur'd without letting all tumble into Ashes. In this case Knowledge and Happiness go together. There is an Ignorance with which there can be no Religion; and therefore when the Apostle *Jude* gave all Diligence to write about the common Salvation, it was needful for him to exhort them that they should earnestly contend for the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

Jude 3.

There are two things that I would observe to you as the matter of this same Zeal that he calls for. *First*, That it is not for any thing later than primitive Christianity, a Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, not to be established upon the Authority of future Councils, He that is able to receive their Dictates, let him receive them, and he that does not like them, may let them

SERM. alone without any great Danger to his Soul. And,
 II. Secondly, By this *Faith* he means, not every particular
 Doctrine, but the main Articles of our Religion. As
 for Example, One thing that Christ revealed was, that
 there is *nothing unclean of itself; whatever enters into the*
 Mat. xv. 11. *Man does not defile the Man, every Creature of God is*
 1 Tim. iv. *good, and to be received with Thanksgiving; but, if any*
 4. *Man esteems any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*
 Rom. xiv. 14. Now, I am not called to contend earnestly with such
 a One; though I may think him in the wrong, yet I
 leave him to his own Master; I am to receive him, but
 xv. 1. not to doubtful Disputations; I that eat am not to despise
 him that eats not. But you will learn what this Faith
 is by the Errors that in the next Verse are oppos'd to it,
 Jude 4. *turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness, and denying*
the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ. The
 Phrases used here, and in other Parts of this Epistle,
 let us see that 'tis the same Case which Peter had spoke
 of, who tells us of some who bring in damnable Here-
 2 Pet. ii. 1. *sies, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon*
themselves swift Destruction. This is undoing all at
 once.

Whatever Opinion struck at this Doctrine, that
 God was manifest in the Flesh, is exposed to the Horror
 of the People. They us'd to run up their Accounts
 of Truth to this one Point; *Hereby know we the Spirit*
 1 John iv. 2, 3. *of God, every Spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come*
in the Flesh is of God; and every Spirit that confesses not
that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh is not of God; and
this is the Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye heard that it
should come, and even now already is in the World. He
 ch. ii. 18, 19. *had told them in a former Chapter, Ye have heard that*
Antichrist should come, and there are many Antichrists.
 He speaks of these as going out from them, by which it
 appears, that they once held Communion with the
 People of God; but there's now a Bar between 'em,
 ver. 21. *a Distinction that is never to be made up; Ye know*
the

the Truth and that no Lie is of the Truth : The Meaning is not, that every good Man is above Mistakes ; but there is a certain Error or Lie that is opposite to the whole Truth of the Gospel, and will be eternally inconsistent with it : *Who is a Liar, but he that denies that Jesus is the Christ, he is Antichrist that denies the Father and the Son.* He pursues the Charge through another Epistle ; *Many Deceivers are enter'd into the World, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, this is a Deceiver and an Antichrist.* Upon this he saith, *Whoever transgresseth and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ has not God ; he that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son ; if any Man come to you and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your Houses, neither bid him Godspeed.* So that, all this while you see, he is not recommending the private Notions of Men, nor indeed those Truths of God that are of a lower Nature ; but his Titles of *Deceiver* and *Antichrist* are given to those who had shatter'd the whole Frame of Christianity, by taking away the Foundation.

ver. 22.

2 Ep. 7.

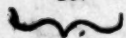
8, 9, 10.

3. OTHER Truths are built upon this, and have their Tendency to it. Whatever else we insist on, as Part of the Counsel of God, yet still we are led hither as the Ground of all. Ministers have a *Dispensation to fulfil the Word of God* : The Thing that we would make known is the *Riches of the Glory of this Mystery*, which is *Christ in you*, or among you, the *Hope of Glory, whom we preach* ; in this one Verse *ἐν ὑμῖν* is translated *among the Gentiles*, and *ἐν οὖν* in you. We have no more Concern in the *Purpose of God* which he hid in himself before the Foundation of the World than as it refers to Salvation. For *whom he did foreknow he predestinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son. He has chosen us in him, that we should be holy* ; we obtain an Inheritance being predestinated according to his Purpose.

Col. i. 26,
27, 28.Rom. viii.
29.

Eph. i. 4.

SERM.
II.



† Compare
theremarks
upon the Bp
of Dublin's
Serm. with
the same
AUTHOR's
late Disc.
upon Li-
berty. The
former is
Arminian-
ism, and the
latter Hob-
bism.

Tho' it's a *true* Notion that all things are fore-seen and appointed by an infinite Mind, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, yet it is all *useless*, if you abstract it from Religion. God has in our day *made foolish the Wisdom of this World*. The same Persons have asserted *Fatality* in the least Actions of Life, who deny *Predestination* in the great Affairs of Eternity †. As if God had determined I should move to a Coffee-house, or any other *Toy-shop*, but had left my getting to Heaven as a thing loose from all Decrees. Solomon saith in these Cases, that *the Legs of the Lame are not equal*. The Parts of the Notion are ill-match'd. What is it to me that every Action of my Life is fix'd, that there is a *Necessity* upon me to do this thing and not another? Where's the Benefit of an Opinion that does but intoxicate; a Fume of Philosophy that gets into the Head and makes us giddy? But take the Doctrine of *Election* as it stands in the Bible, that God

2 Theff. ii.
13.

has *from the beginning chosen some to Salvation through Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of the Truth*, and 'tis both the Glory of an infinite Agent, and the Cordial of a thoughtful Creature.

From this Set of Doctrines we argue a great many more. How does it appear, that we are *justify'd freely by the Grace of God thro' the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, but from this, *that he was manifest in the Flesh?*

1 John iii.
8.

Gal. iv. 4. 5.

For to this Purpose was the Son of God manifested, *that he might destroy the Works of the Devil: He was made of a Woman, and under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons*. How does the Apostle deal with those who denied the Resurrection of the Dead, but by reducing that Doctrine to one of these fundamental Principles? Thus he argues it out, *that if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no Resurrection of the dead? but if there be no Resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be*

1 Cor. xv.

12, 13, 14.

15, 16, 17.

not

not risen, then is our Preaching in vain and your Faith in vain: Yea, we are found false Witnesses of God, because we have testify'd of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. You see that he brings in the Resurrection of Christ as the leading Article, and that by which we are to believe our own. Thus we are exhorted to a Steadiness in the Faith, *that we henceforth be no more Children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the Truth in Love may grow up unto him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ, from whom the whole Body, fully joined together, and compacted by that which every Joint supplies, increases to the edifying of itself in Love.*

Eph. iv. 14,
15, 16.

4. THIS Truth has the most happy Influence upon the Soul both as to Holiness and Comfort. In knowing him we feel the Power of his Resurrection, the Fellowship of his Sufferings, and are made conformable to his Death. This gives us Hope in our Sorrow; for, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. What a Company of useless Notions have we contended for? In getting the Victory we have only hugg'd a Shadow, an Imagination, that has no Reality or Substance in it. There's a Knowledge that puffs up; what we gain by it does not commend us to God. But if we know the Truth as it is in Jesus, there's a Change goes along with the Conviction; we are renewed in the Spirit of our Minds: Learning Christ is oppos'd to committing Uncleaness with Greediness. His coming in the Flesh, being justify'd in the Spirit, believed on in the World, and received up into Glory, are the most powerful Arguments to all Religion.

Phil. iii. 10.

1 Thess. iv.
14.1 Cor. viii.
I.
ver. 8.Eph. iv. 23.
ver. 19, 20.

The Faith we have in such things works by Love; the Love of Christ constrains us; the Love that runs thro' the several Stages of his Action *οὐρίχου ἡμᾶς*, it twitches

2 Cor. v. 14.
ver. 15.

SERM.

II.

1 Cor. v. 15.

1 Tim. iv.

6.

Mic. ii. 7.

1 Tim. i. 15.

Heb. ii. 14.

twitches and draws us to itself, in a sort of Convulsion, that we cannot resist: And what is it that gives the Love of Christ all this Power over us? *because we thus judge that if one died then were all dead, and that he died, that they who live should not live unto themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.* The Doctrine is that Christ died: Every one knows that; but from this he scatters the Seeds of Humility and Resolution. First, the Argument runs backward, that *if he died for all, then were all dead*; it shews us to be in a State of Guilt and Danger, miserable and like to continue so; and then it leads on our Thoughts forwards, to the End he had in dying, *that they who live, who are fetch'd into Life by him, should use it, not to themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again.* Thus we are *nourished up in the Words of Faith and sound Doctrine.* Don't my Words do good, *saieth the Lord, to him that walks uprightly?* And is not his Word as a *Hammer and a Fire that breaks the Rock in pieces*? This Report has melted and moulded the Hearts of Men. As 'tis a *faithful Saying*, so the Holy Ghost makes it *worthy of all Acceptation*,

Some Notions that are engrafted upon the Christian Religion, have none of this vital Virtue. *Their Stock is a Doctrine of Vanities.* The Opinions that are rais'd up by *Men of corrupt Minds*, do no manner of good; they want the Influence that we feel in all the *Mysteries of Godliness.* I'll give you but one Instance, and that is from the Notion of TRANSUBSTANTIATION. If you examine it impartially, you will find it as *Useless* as it is *Ab-surd.* If it was true, it would do no good. My Soul is concern'd to know that *God was manifest in the Flesh*, but not that he is manifest in the Bread. His taking upon him my Nature was needful, that *by Death he might subdue him that had the Power of Death, that is the Devil.* And thus, *He delivers those who*

GROUND of Truth.

27

SERM.
II.

who through Fear of Death, are all their Life-time subject to Bondage. But it adds nothing to this Victory that I should eat his *Body*, every Time that I remember his *Death*. My believing that his Flesh and Blood are both in Heaven and Earth, may prove that my Head has got a *monstrous* Turn, but not that it has got a *holy* one. I have as many Arguments, for my Duty and Hope, if the Bread is not chang'd, as I can have if it is. So that, here's a *Mystery* and a *Miracle* thrown away upon me. My Senses cannot receive it, and my Faith does not need it. The Doctrine of Redemption, which is the Ground of my Assurance, is compleat without it. If Christ, instead of saying this is my Body, had said this is a Representation or Memorial of my Body, he had left me no way deficient either in my Holiness or my Comfort. I may believe (as we see by the Lives of those that pretend to it) that the Bread is chang'd into the Body of Christ, and yet be never the better for it. 'Tis no Security against my *eating the Bread unworthily*, and becoming *guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*. To believe that he really gave himself for me is a Faith that carries all proper Virtue along with it; *The Life that we live, is by this Faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us*. But to believe that a Priest *now* gives him to us signifies nothing at all, 'tis to believe an Impertinence. That sort of receiving him, if it was really his Body, does not make us Saints, unless every one that has taken the Sacrament, is undoubtedly saved. My Concern is about a Spiritual Feeding, that I am Partaker of him by Faith, and find that, to my Soul, *he is Meat indeed, and Drink indeed*. If I have this, I don't want his Body; and if I have it not, the Change of the Bread into the Body, makes it only a *Carnal Ordinance*; and with Reference to this it may be said, *that the Flesh profits nothing*.

Thus

Gal. ii. 20.

SERM.
II.

Thus you see the Doctrine of Christ in the **FIRST** of these Divine Characters; It is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*. It is also in the second a *Mystery*; and in the third the Principle, the Argument and Direction of all *Godliness*, as we may hereafter show: But this part of my Subject should not be dismissed without an **APPLICATION**.

1. IF this is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, 'tis Pity that it should be corrupted; that we cannot have the great Articles of our Religion deliver'd in the Simplicity of the Gospel. The Mystery of Godliness as the Holy Ghost reveals it, looks very great and awful; but it only tends to *darken Counsel by Words without Knowledge*, when Men have froth'd up the Heads of Doctrine in barbarous Terms. *The Trumpet* ought not to give an *uncertain Sound*. That Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him, tho' it conveys to my Soul a *Knowledge that is high, and I cannot attain unto it*, yet the Words are easy to be understood. There's a great Plainness of Speech, tho' a Depth of Wisdom, But to say he is "Light of Light, God of God, very God of very God, is a Twirl of Words that does not appear so full of Majesty." We say of the Doctrine and Language of Scripture, as *Solomon* does in another Case, that it is *Soundness in the Flesh*; but Phrases fetcht from the Mother of Harlots will be *Rottenness in the Bones*.

2. If this is the Pillar and Ground of Truth, what Expectations can we have from those that oppose it? *Other Foundation can no Man lay than that which is laid, Jesus Christ*. What sorts of People God may use in the Cause of Liberty we cannot tell; He's a sovereign Agent in the whole Course of Providence; but it is not likely they should be the Pillars of a Nation, who are doing their utmost to destroy those of Christianity. When our Lord takes to himself *his great Power and reigns*, he will suit his Tools to his Work. *The Salvation of Israel* shall no longer be fetch'd from afar, but

1 Cor. iii.
11.

Rev. xi. 17.

Psal. xiv. 7.

but come at once out of Sion. He raises up the Poor out of the Dust, and lifts up the Begger from the Dunghil, to set 'em among the Princes, and to make 'em inherit the Throne of Glory, for the Pillars of the Earth are the Lord's, and he has set the World upon them.

SERM.
II.

1 Sam. ii. 5.

What a Connexion this has with the Glory of a Redeemer, you will see from the 47th Psalm, which is writ on Purpose to celebrate his Ascension, the Lord is gone up with the Sound of the Trumpet. As one of the Beauties of that Day, when this shall be better known, he closes thus, *The Princes of the People are gathered together, even the People of the God of Abram; for the Shields of the Earth belong unto God, and he is greatly exalted.* It was by Faith in this, and it must be so again, that they subdued Kingdoms, wrought Righteousness, obtain'd Promises, quench'd the Violence of Fire, put to flight the Armies of the Aliens, and out of Weakness were made strong.

Pf. xlvii. 5.

ver. 9.

Heb. xi 34.

What we call Bravery, without these Impressions, is but like the Rushing of the Horse into the Battle; and if such a one falls, he dies as a Fool dies: he goes to an unknown God. But the Christian knows in whom he has believed. He overcomes, even in a Defeat, by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word of his Testimony, and he loves not his Life unto the Death. There's but little Hope in a time of Danger from those who bend their Tongues like their Bow for Lies, but are not valiant for the Truth upon Earth; they proceed from evil to evil, and know not God. Our Confidence is quite dissolv'd when these call themselves the Friends of Liberty, instead of trusting 'em, we must take heed every one of his Neighbour, and not trust in any Brother; for every Brother will utterly supplant, and every Neighbour will walk with Slanders, they will deceive every one his Neighbour, and will not speak the Truth; they have taught their Tongue to speak Lies, and weary themselves to commit Iniquity.

Rev. xii. 11.

Jer. ix. 3.

ver. 4. 5.

See more of this in a Sermon intitul'd *The Nature of Faith*, Nov. 5. 1721.

SER-



May 11.
1718.

SERMON III.

I TIM. iii. 16.

*Without Controversy, great is the
MYSTERY of Godliness.*



WE are now to consider the *second Character* that the Apostle gives us of the Christian Religion; that though it is *true*, and a proper Object of our Belief, yet it is nevertheless MYSTERIOUS. Thus we find it suited to the three Employments of the human Soul. *First*, It is the matter of our *Faith*, what we receive and depend upon. *Secondly*, Of our *Wonder*, what we are fill'd and amaz'd with; and, *Thirdly*, Of our *Practice*, working it self out into Life and Duty. The first of these belongs to that which is *the Pillar and Ground of Truth*; the Second, to that which God himself has call'd a *Mystery*; and the Third, to a Doctrine that is *according to Godliness*. 'Tis made on purpose to form our Behaviour, and give us a holy Turn of Heart, and Life towards all the reveal'd will of God.

I have already consider'd this noble Chain of Doctrines as they are *true*; I am now to take a view of them under another Title, as they are *mysterious*.

sterious. This Character, as well as the Former, belongs to all the Particulars of our Religion; to the *Manifestation* that God made of himself in the Flesh, to his being justify'd in the Spirit, the Reward that was paid him by the *Angels*, the Diffusion of his Name through the *World* by *preaching*, his inward Empire in the Hearts of the Gentiles who *believe* in him, and the Fulness of his Reward, as he was *receiv'd into Glory*. These are all Mysteries. Though we *believe the Report* that is given us concerning them, yet they cannot fail to raise our Hearts, and leave us in a secret Confusion. There's something in every one of them that exceeds the Reason of Man, and yet allures it. We are lost in delightful Mazes, that are neither to be denied nor comprehended. The *Mercy* of our God is in the *Heavens*, and his *Faithfulness* reaches to the *Clouds*; his *Righteousness* is like great *Mountains*, and his *Judgments* are a great deep. Psa. xxxvi.
5. 6.

There are three Words in this Part of the Verse. *First*, That this is a *Mystery*; *Secondly*, That it is a *great* one; and *Thirdly*, That it is so *without Controversy*. I shall take them in their Order, and, so, at present, engage my Thoughts and yours upon that august and mighty Name that is given to the whole Doctrine of the Gospel, which I will convey to you in this Proposition, that

“ The Report we have of Christ Jesus in the new Testament is all a MYSTERY.”

What this Report is, and how mysterious it appears to be, I may show you through the several Branches into which the Distribution is made. At present I shall only consider the Character in a general way, under the following Heads:

1. GIVE some Account what a Mystery is.
2. SHOW you that the mysterious part of any Doctrine does not hinder it from being true.
3. ENQUIRE

SERM.
III.

3. ENQUIRE into the Reasons, why God has reveal'd Mysteries in the Christian Religion.

I. WE must look into the Meaning of the Expression: what it is the Apostle would have us conceive of our Religion when he calls it a *Mystery*. I'm altogether of their Opinion who think that in this Word, he alludes to that which was either the *Glory*, or the *Vanity* of other Religions.

First, 'T IS well enough known that the Priests among the *Heathen*, held the People in Suspence, and led them into a foolish Veneration, by pretending to have certain Secrets in their own Keeping, which the Vulgar were not to know. By that Craft they had their Wealth. It was the Trade of the Tribe. They talk'd as if the Gods had given them a Patent for hoarding up the great Bulk of Mystery, and retailing it out at their own Pleasure.

Rom. i. 21. Thus they became *vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was dark'ned. Every Man was*

Jer. li. 17. *Brutish by his Knowledge, his Molten Image was Falshood.* They render'd themselves *the Rulers of the Darknes of this World.* Now for these Devotions the City of *Ephesus* had been the most famous: They were *Worshippers of the great Goddess Diana, and the Image which fell from Jupiter.*

Acts xix. 15.

Therefore the Apostle furnishes *Timothy* with an Answer to all the Enthusiasm of the People among whom he lived. They valu'd their Religion for Mysteries, for unintelligible Glories: and so may we do ours. Not in the crafty and mercenary way that they did. Our Mysteries are not kept as the Property of the Priests, but scatter'd and given out in an open Manner, that every one may read them. He tells the *Ephesians* that *when they read they might understand his Knowledge in the Mystery of Christ.*

Eph. iii. 4.

Secondly,

Secondly, The *Jews* had Mysteries in their Religion. *David* desires that God would teach him the Wonders of his Law. Their Duty was commonly wove into their Hope. Their Obedience was partly moral and partly ceremonial. Theirs was the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenants, the giving of the Law, and the Promises. God deals not with any other Nation, as he did with them. Their Service, the Fire in their Temple, the Cloud that sometimes fill'd it, the strange Protection which they saw about it, was all a Mystery. Their Figures of the Mercy-Seat above the Ark, and the Cherubims above that shading it with their Wings, poring upon it with Inquisitive Looks; these were among the wonderful Works that he made to be remembred.

Rom.ix.4.
Pla. cxlvii.
20.

Psal. cxi. 4.

Now the Apostle, who always endeavour'd to vindicate the Reputation of the Gospel, would scarce neglect it here. *Timothy's* Father was a *Greek*, and his own Education had been among them, as appears from his not being circumcis'd till he was grown up: but his Mother and Grandmother were both *Jews*, and read the Scriptures. He therefore lets him know, that what they so justly admir'd in the Jewish Religion, was outdone in the Christian: tho' the Figures of a Saviour with which they us'd to converse were Mysteious, yet the Life itself, in the Flesh, in the Spirit, and in his Glory were a great deal more so. Therefore, You may take the Design of the Apostle in these two Positions. It was to show the Preference of our Revelation, First, to the Conceit of the Gentiles; and, Secondly, To the Peculiar of the Jews. It had all That, which the one pretended to in vain, and which the other possess'd in a lower Degree. For without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, God was manifest in the Flesh, &c.

Act.xvi. 3.

2 Tim.i. 5.

SERM.
III.



There have been Debates about the Meaning of the Word. Some would gladly have us believe, that it signifies no more than what is easily comprehended: And that any Truth, though it lies the most open to your Understanding may go by that Name. But this is throwing all Language out of the World; and leaving us uncertain about the Sounds that we hear. If a Mystery is not something out of the common Way, I do not know what occasion we have for the Word itself; and yet it is frequently us'd in the new Testament, which would never have been done, if the Apostle had not design'd to give us some greater Apprehensions of what he calls by that Title. *We speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, even the hidden Wisdom, which he has ordain'd before the World to our Glory.* These are call'd afterwards *the deep Things of God.*

1 Cor. ii. 7.

—10.

I shall not trouble you with Derivations of the Word, which all Sides are agreed in; but I take it to include these four Things, as it is applied to the Doctrines of Religion; 'tis secret, important, it could never have been known but by Revelation, and there's something in it above the Comprehension of our Reason.

1. A MYSTERY is something kept secret, lock'd up from the View of Men. This Sense of it agrees to the Doctrines of Christianity upon a three-fold Account:

1. As they were conceal'd from former Ages.
2. As they are yet so from the greatest Part of the World.
3. As they continue so in some Degree to God's own People.

(1.) THEY were kept secret from former Ages. Thus we are expressly told that this Wisdom of God in a Mystery was *not made known to the Sons of Men.*

SERM.
III.

Men. The Doctrine was hid from Ages and Generations, kept secret since the World began, that is now manifest and reveal'd by the writing of the Prophets, and made known to all Nations, for the Obedience of Faith. Eph. iii. 5. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. The People of God in the old Times had general Hopes, loose and transient Views. Abraham saw the Day of Christ and was glad; David being a Prophet knew that God would, of the Fruit of his Loins, raise up Christ to sit upon his Throne. John viii. 56. Isaiah saw his Glory, and spake of him. Acts ii. 30. This was, in all Generations, the Hope of Israel. Joh. xii. 41. And yet, it was but little they saw or knew, in Comparison of latter Visions. We have Life and Immortality brought out into a better Light. They press'd in vain to our Discoveries; Many Kings and righteous Men desir'd to see the Things that yee see, and have not seen them; and to hear the Things that ye hear, and have not heard them. They all died in Faith, but they had not received the Promises, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. Heb. xi. 40. They were conscious to the Imperfection of their Knowledge, as you may collect from what the Woman of Samaria told our Lord; We know that the Messiah comes, and when he is come, he will teach us all Things. Joh. iv. 25. When John the Baptist had his prophetic Ordination, he was to go before the Face of the Highest, to give the People the Knowledge of Salvation in the Remission of their Sins, whereby the Day-spring from on high would visit 'em. Luk. i. 76, 77, 78. Christ himself was a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of his People Israel. — ii. 32, John was the greatest of those who were born of Women, and yet he that is least in the Kingdom of God, is greater than he.

There was something in their very Privileges that let them know the right Convictions were not yet come. Their Custom of attending the Sanctuary

SERM.
III.

- was in such a manner, that *the Holy Ghost signified thereby, that the way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest*. It was but a Figure for the time present; and the Service which stood in Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings and carnal Ordinances, was impos'd on them only till the Time of Reformation. Thus we find it was in Fact; for when the Son of Man came, he found no Faith in the Earth; they were lost in the Prophecies that related to him; for *tho' the Prophets are read every Sabbath-day, they understood them not, but fulfilled them by condemning him*. Therefore, *we speak the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, which none of the Princes of this World knew*, Men of the highest Figure in the Jewish Church, for *had they known it, they would not have crucify'd the Lord of Glory*. They were shut up under the Law, to the Faith that should afterward be reveal'd.

The Apostle compares the two Dispensations to the two different Ages of Childhood and Maturity. A Child is really possess'd of the humane Nature; he has an immortal Soul, rational Faculties, and is a Being of the same sort with a Person grown up: But how loose are his Reasonings! though the Substance of his Opinion may be right, yet the manner of conducting it is very imperfect. Thus saith the Apostle, *When I was a Child, I thought as a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child*. This he saith of his State in the Jewish Religion, in which he had profited above many his equals in his own Nation: There was a notorious Infancy in their whole Profession. But, saith he, *when I became a Man, I put away Childish Things*. He judg'd of the same Subjects in another way.

Thus was the Doctrine of our Religion a Mystery. The first Name that Christ is call'd by, is *Wonderful*. The great Wonders that are now discovered, at that Time were kept hid, cover'd and vail'd.

So that the Children of Israel could not look to the End of those things, that were to be abolish'd; and this Vail is done away in Christ. The Heir as long as he is a Child differs nothing from a Servant, though he be Lord of all; but is under Tutors and Governours till the Time appointed of the Father: Even so we, when we were Children, were in Bondage under the Elements of the World; but when the Fulness of Time came, God sent forth his Son.

SERM.
III.

2 Cor. iii.

13.

— 14.

Gal. iv. 1;

2, 3, 4.

(2.) THESE things are still kept secret from the greatest part of Mankind. I do not only mean the *Heathen* who know not God, but the Inhabitants of those Countries where the Gospel has come. Our Saviour tells one of his Disciples; *To you it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom, but to them in Parables, that hearing they may hear, and not understand, and seeing they may see, and not perceive.* This Distinction that the Goodness of God has made between some and others, is what he affirms with hearty Praises. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, that thou hast hid these Things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast reveal'd them unto Babes; even so Father, because it seemed good in thy Sight.* Thus the Apostle pursues the Observation, *We are a sweet Saviour of God to them that believe and to them that perish; to the one we are a Saviour of Life unto Life, to the other of Death unto Death.* The Ground of this Difference is not only in their Will, but their Apprehensions; *We preach Christ Jesus, and him crucify'd, to them that perish Foolishness, but to those that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God.* He lets us be assur'd that the natural Man, by whom he does not understand a Person vile in his Morals, but one left to the conduct of his natural Reason, receives not the Things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are Foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned.

Matt. xi.

25, 26

2 Cor. ii.

15, 16.

1 Cor. i. 23.

— ii. 14.

SERM.
III.

The People who deny that Christianity is a Mystery, do plainly prove it; because it's lock'd up from them: *Our Gospel is hid to those that are lost; the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ does not shine into their Hearts, but the God of this World has blinded the Eyes of those that believe not.* We see with how much Equity our Religion may go by this Name. The Learning of Persons laughs at it, their Corruptions war against it. *To the Unbelieving there is nothing pure, but their Mind and Conscience are defiled; both the Faculty that should receive the Evidence of Truth, and that which should make Impressions of Duty. To them that believe, Christ is precious; but to them that be disobedient, he is a stone of stumbling and a Rock of Offence: They stumble at the Word, whereunto they are appointed.*

2 Cor. iv. 3.

— 4.

Tit. i. 15.

1 Pet. ii.
7, 8.1 Cor. xiii.
19.Eph. iv.
12, 13.Phil. iii. 12,
13.

1 Joh. iii. 2.

(3.) THEY are a Secret, even to God's own People; they *know but in Part*, and so *prophecy in Part*. God has indeed open'd the Eyes of their Understanding in the Revelation of himself; but *how little a Portion do they hear of him!* We have the Means of Grace, Pastors and Teachers for edifying of the Body of Christ; but we are not yet come to the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, to the Fulness of the Stature of Christ, to the Measure of a perfect Man. The Substantials of the Truth are as much as we can expect, that we be not like Children toss'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. The more we know, the more we need; not as though we had already attain'd, or were already perfect; but we follow after, if we may apprehend that for which we are also apprehended of Christ Jesus; *Nay, we count not ourselves to have apprehended.*

The Discoveries reserv'd to another World, are laid down in those Terms that shew their Transcendence to every thing here below. We are to see Christ as he is; as if all the Representations we have of him now were some way wrong or untrue.

We

We shall see him *Face to Face*, and know as ourselves *are known*; as if all we had now was but hear-say; and indeed it is no more: For we walk by *Faith* (which comes by hearing) and not by *Sight*. When we have gone as far as Time and Study can carry us, we still see there are vast important Themes yet untouch'd. The *Temple of God* is not to be open'd till we get to Heaven, and there we shall see the *Ark of his Covenant*. Upon these Accounts it may be said, *our Gospel is hid*; It was so to the *Jews*, it is so to those that are lost; and, in part, it is so to the Believer himself; and therefore it may be call'd a Mystery.

SERM.
III.
1 Cor. xiii.
10.

Rev. xi. 19.

2. IT'S call'd a Mystery from its Importance. Several Things are kept secret which it would do us no good to know. It's not worth the while to take off their Vail. Many of the Heathen Discoveries were impertinent and empty, and so are all human Inventions that have crouded into Christianity. Abundance of that sort of Learning that Men admire is hard to come by, and worth nothing when we have it. But what God calls a Mystery is compar'd to a *Garden enclos'd*, a *Spring shut up*, a *Fountain seal'd*: Things that are made both for Necessity and Delight. 'Tis a *Wisdom* ordain'd before the World to our Glory.

Can. iv. 12.

1 Cor. ii. 7.

Mahomet pretended to have Revelations from his *Pidgeon*, and do Wonders upon his *Ass*, but what do they all amount to! The Miracles in the *Popish* Histories are ridiculous. We must not engage the Power of God in Trifles and Childrens Play. But the Name of a *Mystery* as it stands in the new Testament calls up our Veneration for the Thing it belongs to. These Doctrines are *hid with Christ in God*, they are number'd among the Endearments of Eternity; they were the Delight and sweet Counsel that the Father and the Son took together. What

Eph. iii. 9.

SER. M.
III.

is it that the Apostle gives the Name to in our Text, but the Course of a Redeemer from Glory to Glory again! The Value of his Person, the Extreimity of his Suffering, the Merit of his Atonement, the Extent of his Empire, the Effect of his Gospel, and the Fulness of his Reward! These are not only great in themselves, being the History of a God, an Account of his Journey from a Throne to a Cross, and from thence to a Crown; but they are *our own Concern*. This is what we flee to, as the *Hope that is set before us*. 'Tis not a Trifling or a Foreign Mystery; but by these Mazes of Divine Love we are train'd up, and brought on to the *Inheritance reserv'd in Heaven for us*. 'Tis the *Love and Kindness of God our Saviour that appears towards Men*.

1 Pet. i. 3.

Tit. iii. 4.

3. 'Tis call'd a Mystery because it never could have been known, but by Revelation. Had not God himself made the great Disclosure, we must have remain'd for ever ignorant of it. The Apostle tells us it is shut out from all the Avenues of Knowledge. *Eye has not seen it*, Nature shows nothing of Redemption, *the Depth saith it is not in me*, and *the Sea saith it is not with me*; *Ear has not heard it*, Angels would never have told the Secret; the whole World was silent upon that Head: *Neither could it enter into the Heart of Man*; we could not have form'd any Conception or Scheme within our selves; we were not able to give it that poor sort of Life, that we do to a Project in our own Imaginations, if God had not reveal'd it to us by his Spirit. *He made known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy*. This is a Mystery; a Truth that we could never have thought of, and must receive from no other than God himself.

Rom. ix.

23.

This Account you may carry along with you through all the Particulars of our Religion. Who could

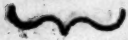
could ever have started the design that God should be *manifest* in the Flesh? that he should come down, and not only live among us, but die for us? that he should rise again to the Esteem of another World, and afterwards plant an Empire in this? These things might have lain in the Folds of the Decree, in the same infinite Mind that form'd them, if God himself had not made them known in the Holy Scriptures.

4. A MYSTERY is something above the Comprehension of our Reason. *The Things of God knows no Man, but the Spirit of God.* Reason is employ'd about the Evidence, whether God has said it or no; but it quietly resigns the rest to Faith. We receive the Doctrines unexplain'd, there is a part in them that we don't understand; but if they are reveal'd they will be admired, and tho' some tell us that to confess a Mystery in our Religion is to give up the Glory of it; yet I am no more asham'd of the Wonders of the Gospel, than I am of the Scandal that attends it, desiring to *preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* And this leads me to

1 Cor. ii. 11.

Eph. iii. 8.

II. SHEW that the Mystery of any Doctrine does not hinder it from being true. 'Tis no Objection against Christianity that there are things in it beyond the Grasp of Reason. *We see thro' a Glass darkly.* This does not make it a Heap of Enthusiasm, a Piece of Priestcraft in those that deliver it, or a blind implicit Faith in them that receive it, as you will see by the following Particulars. 1. The Difficulty or Easiness of a Doctrine does not make it the Matter of our Faith, but we go entirely upon the Sufficiency of the Evidence. 2. This obtains in every part of Life, and it is strange we should exclude it from Religion. 3. It is no way unaccountable that the Nature and the Designs of God should be incomprehensible

SERM.
III.

fible to us. 4. It is necessary that our Understanding should honour the Revelation of God by a Subjection, as well as our Wills by a Compliance. 5. These are not Mysteries of Man's forging, but we have them in the Book of God. 6. They are not conceal'd by any Party or Tribe among us, but lie open to be seen and read of all Men. Therefore, 7. The Design of Preaching them is not to set up the Tyranny of Priests, but to lead People to a Veneration for their God, a Dependence upon him, and an Application to him.

1. 'Tis no Argument against Christianity that it's a Mystery, because our believing of any thing is not at all concern'd in the Difficulty or Easiness of a Proposition, but in the Sufficiency of the Evidence upon which it comes. *Timothy was to continue in the Things he had learn'd and been assur'd of, knowing of whom he had learn'd them.*

2 Tim. iii.
14.

We must distinguish between Knowledge and Faith. Knowledge is the Opinion that we have either from the Observations of our Senses, or the Conclusions of Reason: But Faith is the Apprehension that is rais'd in us by the Testimony of another. And therefore, in that Case, we have no farther Concern than in the Wisdom and Veracity of him that reports it. As, for Example, suppose any Traveller should tell us the strange and barbarous Customs they have among the *Indians*; the Employment of the Mind upon that Occasion is, not whether these Practices are right, or whether we could have imagin'd them, but whether this Man really knows what he tells, and tells what he knows. If we are satisfied that he is not deceived by others, nor we by him, we take the Story tho' it is never so unaccountable. We don't examine the Folly or Stupidity of the Action, but the Validity of the Witness, and so may be said most heartily to believe what we as thoroughly condemn.

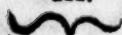
demn. Now, in the Case before us, we have the Report upon the highest Evidence: Whatever God tells us must be true, whether we comprehend it or no, for these two Reasons: First, Because *he is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all*; he cannot be mocked. And, Secondly, *He is a God of Truth, and without Iniquity*, he cannot deceive.

Where's the difference between believing a *Mystery* and receiving a *Prophecy*? Our Reason can reach to neither of them, they are equally beyond the Comprehension of that Faculty. When God told *Abraham* he should be *the Father of many Nations*, he had as much Ground to doubt of that, as we have of any Doctrine in the Christian Religion. But *he staggered not at the Promise of God through Unbelief, he believed in Hope, and against Hope, accounting that he was able to do what he had promis'd*. Not that he knew the way how. He saw there were several Objections against it, but these he drowns in a Veneration for Omnipotence. *He considered not his own Body now dead*; that would have render'd such an Expectation impossible; but when God was to do it, he knew it would pass; for he that could raise the dead, had a right to call the things that are not as though they were. Should we not all of us have condemned *Abraham*, had he not thus received the Promise? Should we not have said of him as the Angel did of *Sarah*; *Wherefore did she laugh, is any thing too hard for the Lord*? Unbelief to such a Word as this must have the Soul of Atheism in it, and proceed from our thinking God to be such an one as ourselves. An Unbeliever gives no other Reason why God cannot do it than this, that *we cannot*.

Well, he expects from us the same Veneration for his Knowledge that *Abraham* gave to his Power. O the depth of the Riches of the Wisdom of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! Why don't we receive a Mystery, but because we don't

Rom. iv.
18, 19.

—xi. 33.

SERM.
III.

don't understand it? And how comes this to be a Reason against it, unless we judge that God knows no more than we do; that because a thing is inconceivable by us, it must be so to him?

If he has really told us, *there are three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one*; if he has said that *God was manifest in the Flesh*, we have as much Reason to believe that, as *Ezekiel* had that the People should return to their own Land. The Difficulty of the Case does not throw it out of our Faith, because it is a God that speaks it; no more than it threw the Promise out of their Hope, because it was a God that should perform it. And if we put the Question upon this Doctrine, it is but the same that God himself did upon the Design, *Son of Man, can these dry Bones live?* If Nature, if Reason, was to answer, it would say No; but

Eze. xxxvii. he returns God's Question as we must do our own, O Lord, thou knowest. Is it possible that three Persons should be in one Nature, and two Natures in one Person? we may say, the Lord knows. But if he has revealed it, Faith has Evidence enough. Don't say this makes Religion no more than a Reverend Blindness, that it is a Sealing up of the Understanding; for

2. THIS Sort of Faith obtains in every Part of Life, and it is strange that we should deny it in Religion. *1 John v. 9.* *If we have received the Witness of Men, the Witness of God is greater which he hath given of his Son.* Thus it is in all Practice. We resign ourselves at Sea to the Conduct of others, tho' to us 'tis all a Mystery that People should know their Road and Distance from Places by the Stars. But would it not be very weak for us to say there's no such thing as naval Learning, merely because we ourselves have it not? If a Person, whose Skill and Veracity I have no doubt of, should tell me he has seen or made an Engine that by the moving of a Finger should lift up a Tun, the Thing

Thing itself is what I can neither contrive nor imagine, and yet upon my Opinion of the Man I should easily believe it.

This Principle runs through the World; there could be no Living, if People were not as satisfied in what others tell 'em, as in what they see themselves. And, what! must God alone be out of Credit with us! Shall a Report be to us *the Evidence of things not seen* in ten thousand Cases, and must it have no place in Religion? May it not be said in this Case, *O House of Israel are not your Ways unequal?* Remember our Gospel is revealed by Him who can neither receive a Delusion, nor give one. *His Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, and Deceit is an Abomination to his Lips.* 'Tis upon this Evidence that we believe; Infinite Wisdom and Eternal Truth.



SERMON IV.

May 25.
1721.

3.  F any thing is incomprehensible to us, it must be the Nature of an infinite God, and the awful Designs of his Will. Now this is the Mystery of the Gospel; it gives us the *Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God* 2 Cor. iv. 6. *in the Person of Jesus Christ.* His Mercy to Sinners *is in the Heavens, his Faithfulness to the Saints above the Clouds.* His Righteousness *is like the great Mountains.* Why should it be a thing incredible or shocking to humane Reason, that there is a Depth in this Doctrine that it cannot reach! Do not the common Notions we have of Him that made the World tell us, that *we cannot by searching find out God, we cannot* Job xi. 7, 8, 9,

SERM.
IV.

not find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is higher than Heaven, what can we know? deeper than Hell, what can we do? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. These Apprehensions diffuse themselves thro' all our Sentiments of a God.

Job xxxvii. *Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out.*

23.

If his Decrees are to be explained, or his Nature comprehended, he is not equal to an Adoration; he is become too little for our Reverence and Godly Fear. Our Esteem for him is upon the Ground of those Perfections, that *he is the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.* We are forc'd to make use of these Negatives for want of Thoughts and Words that are commensurate to the Subject. There's something in the Attributes of *never-beginning* and *never-ending* that leads us out of our Depth. We are lost in our Con-

Psal. xc. 2.

ceptions of a Being that is *from everlasting to everlasting.* And yet, is it not the highest Reason that we should in this manner judge of him who *is before all things, and by whom all things consist?* In the Mystery of Godliness we consider his Justice, his Purity, his Goodness, and his Power, as combining all their Glories, and making 'em appear together: And, if there's any Truth in the Matter, it must be incomprehensible.

Pf. cxxxix.

6.

Such Knowledge is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain unto it.

We look upon this whole Contrivance as a thing that was laid long before the Execution. The Scripture gives us the Date of it, from before the Foundation of the World: And are those Counsels to be settled and unfolded by Creatures of *yesterday*? Do we suppose that God liv'd without any Designs? and, if he had them, must it not be in a way transcendent to all the Enquiries of Men? Can any thing be more agreeable and certain than that *secret things belong to God, and things revealed unto us?* Does he not speak like

Deu. xxix.

29.

Isa. lv. 8, 9.

himself, when he saith My Thoughts are not as your Thoughts,

Thoughts, nor my Ways as your Ways? And is not the Comparison laid within all the Bounds of Modesty, that as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are his Ways and Thoughts above ours?

If there is a God, and he has form'd any Purpose within himself, it must be of a Bulk and Depth that we are not able to take within our Compass. *The Secrets of Wisdom are double to that which is;* and therefore he shews himself a *vain Man* who will be wise in these Matters. When People say they will not be of a Religion that they cannot understand, there is one Sense of the Word that is honest and good; but there's another that carries with it all the Pride of Impiety. If they mean no more by it, than that they would understand *why* they are of such a Religion, 'tis right and fair; we ought to *give a Reason of the Hope that is in us*, and therefore we should have one. But if they will admit no more into their Religion than what Reason could have found without a Revelation, and what it can explain and divest of all its Mystery, 'tis a vile Absurdity. *Professing themselves to be wise they become Fools.*

Do you say that you'll adore no God but one whose Nature comes down to the Apprehension of yours? That you will believe nothing that he tells you, but what you might have known if he had never told it? What a narrow Deity are you taking up with? What! is this the God that made the Heavens, that formed the dry Land, that filled and bounded the Sea, of whom you speak? No, surely; go among the Heathen, make gods as they do, and then you may understand all that's in them. But will you talk in this manner of him who has *measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, meted out the Heaven with a Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales and the Hills in a Ballance? Who has directed the Spirit of this Lord, or been*

SERM.

IV.

Job xi. 6.

12.

Isa. xl. 12.

13, 14.

18, 25.

SERM.
IV.

Job xxxviii.

1, 2, 4, 6,

12, 16,

18, 23.

being his Counsellor has taught him? With whom took he Counsel, and who instructed him in the Path of Judgment, and shewed him the Way of Understanding? To whom will ye liken God, or what Likeness will ye compare unto him? He repeats this last Question himself, To whom then will you liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One? May not these Questions throw as much Confusion upon your Minds as they did upon Job, when God spoke 'em out of the Whirlwind? Who is this that darkens Counsel by Words without Knowledge? Where wast thou when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? declare if thou hast Understanding. Where-
12, 16, upon are the Foundations thereof fastened, or who laid the Corner-stone thereof? Hast thou commanded the Morning since thy Days? or caus'd the Day-spring to know its Place? Hast thou entred into the Springs of the Sea, or hast thou walked in the Search of the Depth? Hast thou perceived the Breadth of the Earth? Declare, if thou knowest it all. Knowest thou the Ordinances of Heaven? Canst thou set the Dominion thereof in the Earth?

Can you establish Notions for the rest of Mankind about the Course of the Stars, the Motion of the Earth, and the Periodical Flow of the Waters? No, it's plain, we know little of the Matter. Very learned Men in former Ages have left behind 'em those Systems that we despise, and we cannot defend our own against the same Usage from Posterity. This Change of Opinions is an Argument that the Thing itself is unknown. Well, shall the Works of Nature be clos'd, and those of Grace be open? Are there Mysteries every where in the World, and must there be none in Religion? Is the Wisdom of God to be more admir'd in the Ways he takes for our temporal Subsistence, than it is in providing for us a Life and Immortality? As thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; even so thou knowest not the Works

Ecd. xi. 5.

of

of God, who maketh all. Marvellous are his Works, as the Souls of his People know right well. There are Riches of Glory in this Mystery.

SERM.
IV.

Pf. CXXXIX.

14.

Col. i. 27.

The Argument lies in this, that if God has laid a Design of Redemption for his People, if he did send his Son into our Nature, if he made him a Propitiation for us, if we are accepted in him, and sanctify'd by him, these are things that we must believe; but upon no other Foundation than because he has said 'em. However, they will always continue to be the *deep things of God; the unsearchable Riches of Christ*. They are true upon the Light of Revelation that brings 'em, but they will be mysterious from the Matter of which they consist; and it is impossible, considering how little we know of other things, that we should ever comprehend all the Wonders of these. God dwells in *Light* unapproachable, *whom no Man has seen, nor can see*.

2 Tim. vi.
16.

4. CONSIDER how needful it is that our Understandings do their Duty to God's Wisdom by believing a Revelation, as well as our Wills be obedient to his Authority by complying with a Precept. We have not attain'd, but follow after, if we may apprehend; and we count not our selves to have apprehended.

Phil. iii.
12, 13.

He is to be glorify'd in every Faculty; He will have the Tribute of our whole Nature. Every Faculty was polluted in the Fall, every one of them is renew'd by his Grace, and therefore they are all to have their proper Share in a Life of Duty. There's as much Reason for the Faith of a good Man, as there is for his Self-denial. What Argument is there against a Mystery that will not hold as well against a Command? I do not now mean the Duties of Justice and Mercy that should run through all our Behaviour to Men, or the Fear and Reverence that should fill our Worship to God; but there are other Parts of Obedience that every Christian knows to be needful: A Continuance in the Ways of God at the Expence of all that is dear to Flesh and Blood;

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what

SERM.
IV.

what our Lord calls a *taking up the Cross and following him*, without which we cannot be his Disciples. Sometimes the Positions of Interest and Conscience are so malignant to one another, that *no Man can serve both God and Mammon*. We are call'd to *for-sake Father and Mother, and Children, and Houses, and Lands*, for the sake of the Gospel. We have it in our Choice to live with Fame and Fulness, to roll in the Preferments of the World, but then this is plainly giving up the Honour that comes from God only, and putting far from us everlasting Life. In a word, things are sometimes brought to that Pass, that *he that saves Life shall loose it, and he must loose it who will save it to Life eternal*.

Now these Martyrs are enroll'd in the Records of God, as those that *overcame by the Blood of the Lamb, and the Word of their Testimony, and they lov'd not their Lives unto the Death*. Could not they say as much against this as we do against Mysteries? they were not guided in that Submission by Sense, or by Reason. There was something in their Choice very unaccountable to a Carnal Mind. There could be no greater Absurdity to humane Reason than what the Apostle saith, *though I suffer these Things I am not asham'd*. Every Martyr might have had Arguments enough against his Afflictions, the Ruin of a Family, and loss of Reputation, Health or Life, but he *endur'd as seeing him who is invisible*, which sounds like a Contradiction; they *had respect to the Recompence of Reward*, which was all out of Sight: Christ *whom they lov'd, they had not seen*, and yet *though they saw him not, believing in him, they rejoyc'd with a Joy unspeakable and full of Glory*. His Will concerning them was declar'd in a strange Article; but upon the whole, was it not right for them thus to dye? Has not this Faith given the Elders a good Report?

Well,

Well, these were a sort of practical Mysteries, and stand upon the same Foundation with those that are Doctrinal, *i. e.* the Revelation of our God. Now, why must we sacrifice every certain Interest in this World, our Fame, our Ease, our Estates and Lives to his *Authority*, and yet resolve that we will make no Surrenders to his Wisdom? We do these Things because he is our *Master*, and is there nothing owing to him as our *Teacher*? 'Tis he that *has put Wisdom in the inward Parts, and has given Understanding to the Heart*: Is the Will to be all at his Service, and the Understanding excus'd from Duty? We are said to *comprehend a Love that passes Knowledge and to be filled with all the fulness of God*; but the Phrases must be expounded with Modesty, because the God who gives us those Blessings is *able to do exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think*, and he actually does so by *the Power that works in us*.

Job
xxxviii. 36;

Ep. iii. 18;
19, 20.

You may run the parallel between *Abraham's* believing that he should be *the Father of many Nations*, and your believing a Doctrine of the Gospel. A Promise and a Mystery are equally above the Comprehension of our Reason. I will now make the same Comparifon between his Obedience, and our Faith. When he was order'd to leave his Father's House, and go into a Country that God would tell him of, by Faith *he obeyed, and went out not knowing whither he went*; nothing but Faith could make him do it; that was the venturous Principle, that trusted God, relied upon his Word, and was satisfy'd in his Providence. It was certainly right in *Abraham* to do what he did. Now, suppose God had told him any thing that was purely a Doctrine, should not That have had the same admission into his Thoughts that the other had into his Practice? This is the Language of a Believer, "Lord I am universally thine, " my whole Soul is for thee, and let every Faculty have a share of the Service. As my Will regards

Heb. xi. 8;

SERM. "thy Command, my Understanding does the same
 IV. "by thy Gospel; what ever thou hast said I must
 "receive either into my Faith or into my Practice."

Eph. iii. 3. *By Revelation he makes known to us the Mystery.*

5. CONSIDER, these are not Mysteries of Man's forging. Don't suppose that in this Argument, we are stealing away your Reason, or your Liberties, and giving them up to the Controul of others. *We renounce those hidden Things of Dishonesty, and hate to walk in that Craftiness.* This infamous Practice has made the Name of a Mystery to be abhorr'd.

Cor. iv. 2.

That monstrous Iniquity of the Papists the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is such a Bondage upon Humane Nature both in Soul and Body, that I shall ever encourage the Jealousy of the World against humane Impositions, and I long for those better Times when that Jealousy shall burn like Fire, and the Flame fasten upon those that rais'd it; when either Priests will teach nothing but by the Rule, or if they do, that the People will not believe them. 'Tis loading both Sense and Reason with a Burden too heavy for them to bear, when any tell us that here's a Change without an Alteration, or a Creation without a God; that what we taste and see and smell, and feel to be Bread is really Flesh and Blood; that it's both in Earth and Heaven; that it's eaten as a Morfel and ador'd as a Deity; that we swallow what we worship; that it continues the same, and yet is chang'd. These are Contradictions: 'Tis a wrong Way of addressing humane Nature: It makes our Reason and Senses pass for nothing; and it is worse still to call this a *God*, and to suppose that a certain formal Sinner in a fantastical Garb by the muttering of four Words, has it in his Power to work all these Wonders. They call it a Mystery indeed, and so they may; but it is what the Scripture has never given that Name to, unless it be in Disgrace, when it speaks of a *Mystery of Iniquity*, that in the last Times was to be celebrated

ted with *lying Wonders*, and with all *Deceivableness of Unrighteousness* in them that perish. Now, this is plainly *Art and Man's Device*. The Text they bring for it out of the Bible would never convince any one, if they did not fortify their Interpretations with Fire and Faggot, and take that way of driving Hereticks out of the World, that they may drive Hypocrites into the Church.

SERM.
IV.

2 Thef. xi.
9. 10.

But the Doctrines of the Gospel are of another Kind. If you do not find them in the Bible, you need not be concern'd about them. That which we preach is *the Record that God has given of his Son*. We have not followed cunningly devised Fables; but have a sure Word of Prophecy to which we do well to take Heed. As we allow'd of God to be put in Trust with the Gospel, so we speak,

1 Joh. v. 10.

2 Pet. i. 16.

19.

2 Thef. ii.

4.

6. THESE Mysteries are not confin'd to any Party or Tribe, but lye open to the Perusal of all. All Men are to see what is the Fellowship of the Mystery. If Ministers are suppos'd to understand them better, it is not from any external Character, and much less from any Ceremony that is acted upon them, or any Garb and Distinction in those that do it. No Illumination goes along with humane Fingers. That God who puts no Trust in the Legs of a Man has as much Contempt of his Hands. If these have a greater Knowledge of the Doctrine, it is because God has blest their Studies. They give Attendance to Reading and Exhortation; they are suppos'd to search the Scriptures daily; and, above all, to depend on the Light that comes from above; for all their Sufficiency is of God, who makes them able Ministers of the new Testament.

Eph. iii. 9.

Pl. cxlvii.
10.

2 Cor. iii.
5, 6.

The Revelation is as open to you as it is to them. You are to judge of the Doctrines they bring. If they talk of any Mysteries that are not to be found in the Bible, deal with them as you would with old Mens Dreams, and old Wives Fables. Christia-

SERM.
IV.

Heb. viii.

11.

Isa. viii. 20.

1 Joh. iv. 1.

Gal. i. 8.

Act. xvii. 2.

nity is no Secret lodg'd with a particular Order. All the Saints *shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.* Therefore take nothing upon Trust, but remember the Place of your last Appeal, *to the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them.* Try the *Spirits whether they be of God.* If they preach any other Gospel than what is revealed, instead of receiving their Blessing, you may give in your Curse. Search the Scriptures daily, *whether the Things be so, or not.* So that

7. THE preaching of these Mysteries is not setting up the Tyranny of a Priest. I hope I shall ever abhor *all that* as the vilest Abuse of Christianity, and one of the most pernicious Crimes in our Nature. I know not any thing that has done more harm in the World, than for Men to teach and command what they have no Ground for in Scripture. They are *the Light of the World, but if the Light that is in them be Darkness, how great is that Darkness?*

Here the Case is quite otherwise. You are not call'd to believe these Things because *we* demand it, nor is your Faith to be either paid with Places, or drag'd on with Penalties: You don't believe at a Market-price; There's no Employment either of Craft or Force to set home the Mystery of Godliness. Christ uses you as he would have you us'd. Don't say, here's a Subjection of your Reason, or any Hardship offer'd to it. There's the fairest Proposal that Man can receive, or God can give; for his Grace *that brings Salvation, has appear'd to all Men.* You're bid to examine these Doctrines, to do it impartially; and is there any thing wrong in this? Do not say we are imposing upon you. Your Conscience knows that is false. *Our Gospel is not of Deceit, nor of Uncleanness, nor of Guile.*

Tit. xi. 11.

1 Thes. ii.

3.

If we bring plain Scripture for any Doctrine, receive it; not for our Sakes, but because it is the Word

Word of Truth, the Language of a *God that cannot lye*; and if we do not, continue your Unbelief, harden your selves in it, and resolve to be unmov'd. But, can you say that we ply you with humane Authority? that, what we urge for the Divinity of Christ, the Truth of his Satisfaction, the Imputation of his Righteousness, the Infusion of his Grace, are any of that *vain Conversation, that we have received by Tradition from the Fathers*? Do we pretend to prove this as they do the Cross in Baptism, Kneeling at the Sacrament, or Bowing to the East? Are they the Decrees of Councils, the Inventions of Synods? Are such pitiful Rags of Authority all that we have to say for them? No, *We are manifest to God, and I trust are also manifest to your Consciences*, and therefore use us as good *Stewards of the manifold Grace of God*: It is requir'd of a Steward that a Man be found faithful. Examine that, and trust us no farther than we prove every Opinion. Your Faith is not owing to us, we come to beg it for our God.

1 Pet. i.
18.

2 Cor. iii.
3.

1 Cor. vi.
1, 2.

I should now have gone into the third general Head, which is to show you the *Usefulness* of Mysteries in Religion, or what good they do there; In answer to that Question, why would God suffer any thing of this Nature in Christianity? but I am aware that would fill up more Time than is now left me; I will therefore enter upon something that's equal to the few Minutes that remain, and that is an APPLICATION of what you have heard.

Is it not strange that any should dispute, whether Christianity is Mysteious or no? The Text says *it is as plainly as any thing can be said, and that it is so without Controversy*, and shall we have a Controversy whether it be so or no? This is a Contradiction to the whole Language of Scripture, an Affront upon the Experience of God's People in every Age; It tends to the Ruin of practical Religion, and it *increases to more and more Ungodliness*.

SERM.

IV.

1 Cor. ii. 4.
5.

1. THIS contradicts the whole Language of Scripture. If there are no Mysteries in Christianity, why should the Word be so often rung in our Ears? Why does God use a Phrase that has no meaning, and bestow a vain Pomp upon his Doctrines, rather to confound us than to make us wiser? Why have we any other than *Words of Truth and Soberness*? When we read of the deep Things of God, of the *Wisdom of God in a Mystery*, and the *hidden Wisdom that was ordain'd before the World unto our Glory*; when we are told that these are things that the natural Man receives not, that they are only spiritually discerned, that they are hid from the Wise and Prudent; that they are the *unsearchable Riches of Christ*; are all these only great swelling Words of Vanity? Sounds unfill'd? or is there a Sense going along with them in Proportion to the Majesty which they bear?

What can we suppose that the great God is talking of, when he takes Expressions that are out of the way, and never us'd on any other Occasion? He tells us of a Mystery manifest to the Saints; he calls it the *Riches of the Glory of this Mystery*: He directs us to an *Acknowledgement* of the Mystery, and saith that in Christ are *hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. Is this no more than a Flourish of Words over a Doctrine that was plain, and might have been known without a Revelation? How unworthy is such a Reflection, of his Purity, how unworthy of his Goodness? He is not capable of that Character in himself, and he has never deserv'd it from you. Look into your Bibles; call Things by the Names that are given them there. Stand to that Language; it will do, when the Froth and Laughter of Fools are dissolved and confounded. Remember who it is that has told you of the *Fellowship of the Mystery*, that from the Beginning of the World has been hid in God, and that to the Church is made known the manifold

Wisdom

Eph. iii. 9.
10.

Wisdom of God. And if any one tells you otherwise, the Decision of the Case is very easy; *Let God be true, and every Man a Liar. He is to be justify'd in his SAYINGS, and to overcome when he is judged.*

SERM.
IV.
Rom.iii.4.

2. THIS Opinion, that there are no Mysteries in Religion, is an Affront upon all the Experience of God's People in every Age. I own as readily as you would have me, that no Thoughts, no Sensations of the good Men that have gone before me ought to be the Rule of my Thinking and Tasting: Faith and Feeling are Personal. But yet, some Regard should be had to the Generation of God's Children; not to offend against them, or to entertain a Notion that all of them have been in a Mistake. We'll suppose that *some* of them were weak, and not able to comprehend what you do, but are *all* of them so? *Art thou the first Man that was born, or wast thou made before the Hills? Dost thou restrain the Secret of God to thy Self? What knowest thou that others knew not?*

Job xv. 7
8.

The Apostle when he speaks but of one Mystery that you find in this Chain (*viz.* preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles,) or rather of a Circumstance belonging to it, the cutting off of the Jews, and their Restoration again, he's lost in the Subject, *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways past finding out! Who has known the Mind of the Lord, or who has been his Councillor? for of him and to him and through him are all Things.* What need was there of this Excursion, if the Doctrine contained no Wonder in it? Why should he use that Vehemence of Language, if there was no Occasion for it? And as it was with him, so it has been with all those who have obtained the like precious Faith. They have look'd into the Book of God: they have thought the Revelation sufficient for their Faith, but the *Master* of it above their Reason. This they have confess'd, and (which is the best way of owning it)

Rom.xi.
33, 34.
36.

it

SERM.
IV.

it has made them earnest for heavenly Directions; they have reach'd after more Light with Prayer and Fervour; their Enquiries have run out into Adorations. This has been the Practice of those who *walked humbly with their God*, and were upright before him in the midst of a crooked and perverse Generation; with these Thoughts they liv'd, and with the Comforts that flow'd from them they dy'd. The Opinion always sunk them in their own Eyes, made them useful to the World whilst they knew it, and easy to be gone when they were call'd to leave it.

Now, what have we in Ballance to *their* Character in those who would lead us aside from the Doctrines which they taught and believ'd? This was the Profession of our Fathers who *through Faith and Patience do now inherit the Promises*. Paul we know, Peter we know, what they said and apprehended we can tell, but *who are these*, that are for beating all down again? What's the Language of this new Opinion? Put it with the greatest Modesty you can, and it must run to this Purpose. "Alas! good Men! they are mistaken. There's no Mystery in what they admitted, no Truth in many Things which they believed. Their Devotion upon these Heads might all have been spar'd; the God they serv'd kept 'em in the Dark both living and dying, but WE see into the strong Delusion, and are deliver'd from the *Enthusiasm* of former Ages." And who are this sett of Men, whom God has taught at a better rate than ever he did his Prophets, his Martyrs, his humble faithful People, in the several Ages of the World? What is there in them that shows a greater Illumination? Or, why must we, in Compliment to them, throw a Slur upon the *Cloud of Witnesses* that have gone before us? I do not love to make invidious Comparisons, and will therefore only say of the one sort and the other, *You know the Men and their Communications*.

3. THIS tends to the Ruin of practical Religion: When People are *corrupted from the Simplicity of the Gospel*, when they lay aside the Truth as it is in Jesus, 'tis foretold, and it may be observ'd, that this will *increase to more and more Ungodliness*. And the Reason is plain, why it should do so; If once there is a Refusal to admit any thing upon a divine Testimony, it destroys a Confidence in God. If we cannot trust his Word for a Doctrine, we cannot trust it for a Promise. It throws us into our Selves, we are *alienated from the Life of God*, can neither live to him in Duty, nor live with him in Communion, *through the Darkness that is in us*: This makes us *cast off Fear and restrain Prayer before him*.

SERM.
IV.

² Tim. ii.
16.

Job xv. 4.

These are Mysteries of Godliness. Godliness flows from them, and is maintained by them. We read of some who *speak great swelling Words of Vanity, and allure through the Lusts of the Flesh and much Wantonness, those who were clean escaped from them that live in Error: Whilst they promise them Liberty, they themselves are the Servants of Corruption*. Corruption brings Error, and Error brings that. *The Time shall come that they will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts shall heap to themselves Teachers having itching Ears; and so they shall be turned away from the Truth, and be turned unto Fables*. You will have Men drink, and swear, and commit Iniquity with Greediness, and in that Filth be zealous against the Doctrines of the Gospel: as if any Character was good enough for those that *oppose Christianity*, though we know what manner of Persons they should be who *maintain it*. He who refuses a Mystery because he cannot understand it, will be as ready to flight a Precept because he does not like it. And, indeed, I fear, it is from a hatred of practical Godliness that many run into strange Opinions. It is a sort of a Bauble to the Conscience. Something for it to play with, and divert it self by.

² Pet. ii.
18. 19.

² Tim. iv.
3, 4.

4. THIS

SERM.
IV.

Pf. lxxxii.

12.

2 Thes. ii.

11.

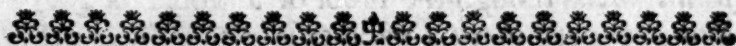
Rom. i. 26.

28.

2 Tim. iii.

13, 14.

4. THIS will increase to more Error. And there are two Reasons to be given for it. *First*, The natural Tendency of that Principle; and, *Secondly*, the judicial Resentment of God. He gives them up to *walk after their own Lusts*. He leaves them to *strong Delusions*, to *vile Affections*, to a *reprobate Mind*; *Evil Men and Seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceiv'd*. Therefore, do you *continue in the Things that you have learned*. If once a Person has any Objection against a Divine Testimony he can stick at nothing. He is loose, and open to *every Wind of Doctrine*; He is driven from his Anchor; He has no Hold; nothing to keep him firm and steady. From rejecting one Point of Scripture we naturally go on to strike at the whole Foundation. And when we come that length, to think that God has given us no Rule for our Faith and Practice, there is nothing so foolish and impious in the Religion of the Heathen, but we may tumble into it. These are some of the Consequences of denying that *Christianity is Mysterial*.

June 8.
1718.

SERMON V.

III.



HAT is the BENEFIT of having Mysteries in the Christian Religion? Why could not our Law-giver have done, as others did, only laid before us a sett of Rules, and distributed them under the several Heads of Practice, without ever engaging our Faith in any Speculations at all?

I suppose,

I suppose, you are no Strangers to the Objection that's form'd upon this Head, and in how triumphant a manner some Persons have talk'd it, as if they were sure of destroying the Foundation that God has laid in *Sion*, and making *him* a second time to be *despis'd of the Builders*, whom infinite Wisdom has appointed to be *the Head of the Corner*. Upon this we have had a run against the Religion of the Gospel. They have turn'd its *Glory into Shame*, and taken Occasion to laugh at it for the sake of those Doctrines that distinguish it above all others. We have this Account from the Apostle, that he was call'd to *preach the unsearchable Riches of Christ, to make all Men see, what is the Fellowship of the Mystery, the manifold Wisdom of God.*

Eph. iii. 8,
9.

'I hat Christianity has deliver'd to us the best Rules of Life, that all the Morality of the Heathen falls short of the Directions we meet with here, that *the Grace of God which brings Salvation teaches us to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World*, is what we may affirm. And though the Proof of it would be a large Work, yet really 'tis a very easy one. There needs no more, in order to it, than opening many Branches of Duty, and comparing what the Gospel saith upon these Heads, with the Lessons of Philosophers. The Dispensations they were under are said to be *Times of Ignorance*, but ours is a *Heavenly Vision*, it calls Men to repent and turn to God, and do things meet for Repentance.

Tit. ii. 11,
12.

But then, the Question is, why there's any thing more in Religion than Commandments? Why, in a Life of Duty, there must be a *looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of our great God and Saviour*? and why we ought to consider him as having given himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People that are zealous of good Works?

ver. 4.

In

SERM.
V.

In answer to this, I would, first, lay down my Assertion, and then maintain it. I do therefore, without any recoil, affirm, that the Mysteries which God has revealed in the Gospel are the Glory of that Dispensation: That, the Rules of Duty had been imperfect without them: That, they are suited to all the Work of Grace in our Hearts, and all its Employment in our Lives: That, we could not have known *what is good, in doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with our God*, had he not shown it to us in this Light. These Doctrines are so far from being unconcern'd with Practice, that the whole is a *Mystery of Godliness*.

How well they are plac'd in our Religion you will see by the following Particulars; 1. We are thus led to an Esteem for the Salvation it self that infinite Wisdom has contriv'd: 2. We have the best Arguments for our Duty from the Incarnation, Satisfaction and Resurrection of Jesus Christ: 3. We have the noblest Example of all practical Holiness from God's being manifest in the Flesh: 4. We are inclin'd and encourag'd to the Duty of Prayer by this new and living Way that is consecrated for us: 5. We have the greatest Hopes of succeeding in the whole Course of our Duty from the Method of Redemption that is now Establish'd: 6. We have the Principles of all Practical Religion enlarg'd and refresh'd by the Mysteries that are laid before us: 7. We are made low in our own Eyes, because of the Ignorance that is in us: 8. We see the Necessity of depending upon the Spirit for Illumination: 9. We are taught a greater Value for the Revelation God has given of himself: And 10. it draws out our Desires after Heaven, where those Things are no longer to be known through a Glass darkly, but in God's own Light we shall see their Light.

Of this Advantage are the Mysteries of Godliness, without 'em these noble Ends could not have been answer'd.

swer'd. The best Rules of Life must have lost their Design, and lain waste in the Book of God. We have *the Knowledge of Salvation by the Remission of Sins, thro' the tender Mercy of our God; the Day-spring that visits us from on high, gives Light to those that sit in Darkness, and guides their Feet into the Way of Peace.* When the Law is establish'd by Faith, it gets a Firmness and an Influence that it could never have had any other way.

SERM.
V.

Luk. i. 77.
78, 79.

Rom. iii.
31.

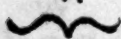
1. BY the Mysteries of the Gospel we are led to an Esteem for the Salvation it self that God has given us, because thus we see it was the Contrivance of infinite Wisdom. The Faith of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Mystery which is after Godliness, are in hope of eternal Life, which God has manifested through the Preaching that is committed to his Ministers. There's more of the Divine Love to be admir'd in the second Covenant, than there was in the first. Adam's Religion, as far as we know it, was, *That the Man who does those Things shall live by them.* And in that Dispensation he was to adore the Goodness of his Maker, who suffer'd himself to be sought unto, and visited by the Work of his own Hands.

Tit. i. 2, 3.

Rom. x. 5.

But the Recovery of this Happiness when it was lost, is a Thing more out of the way. There's a Compass to be taken in the Contrivance. The Law was included in a short Revelation, obey God's Authority, and thou shalt have his Favour; there was no more for God to do than to make known his Will. But when Justice had been provok'd, and Goodness abus'd, in order to give Mercy a new Course for its Glory, there are Methods to be found out, Oppositions removed, an incensed Nature must be reconcil'd, a polluted one restor'd. And therefore when the Love and Kindness of God towards Man now appears, it looks otherwise than it did in Paradise. The Revelation brings along with it more Beneficence, in that it is *not by Works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy that he saves*

Tit. iii. 4.
5, 6.

SERM.
V.

us by washing of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Here's Pains to be taken: Here's a Change to be wrought: This Work he sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Our first Parents would have valued any Manifestation that God made of himself to them. When they heard his Voice in the cool of the Day, it might have cheer'd their Souls, though they had done nothing to lose his Favour. But what's this to the Discoveries that are now sent among a lost Race!

Pf. viii. 4. *What is Man, since the Fall, that God is mindful of him, and the Son of Man that he now visits him!* The Salvation that we should have deserv'd in Paradise must have been paid in as the Wages of Duty; but to be saved by the Manifestation of a God in the Flesh, by his bringing in *an everlasting Righteousness*; to be made happy at his Expence as a High Priest, and by his Virtue as a King, those are new Endearments to the Favour. Rom. x. 4. *Christ is the end of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believes.* It represents our Happiness as *bought with a Price*; we must value it, not only for what it's worth, but for what it actually cost, *the precious Blood of the Son of God, as* 1 Pet. i. 19. *a Lamb without Blemish, and without Spot.*

When our Saviour tells the Person who was *willing to justify himself, this do and thou shalt live*, he does not only put him upon a Thing impossible, but in that Scheme he hides the Glory of Divine Mercy. Could we do that by which we may live, there would be little room to admire the Goodness of God, and much less to adore his Wisdom. Salvation had come cheap; we had made it our Selves: but when we are told, in order to it, there's an old Guilt to be done away, and a new Nature to be implanted, it shows that an infinite Mind must have been at work about it.

2 Cor. v.
19.

The Word of Reconciliation, that he has committed to us, is That God is in Christ Jesus reconciling the World

World unto himself, not imputing their Trespases to them. This is a great deal more than he needed to have said to Adam. There was then nothing but a continuing the Communion in which he was plac'd at first: But now, here's *First*, a *Reconciling us to himself*. And therefore, *Secondly*, He would have blessed our first Parents without a Mediator, us'd them as he did the Angels; they might have come at once to his Throne; but now there is a middle Person between God and Man, it is in *Christ Jesus* that he reconciles them. And how is it? but, *Thirdly*, In a way that our first Parents had no occasion for, and that is by *not imputing their Trespases to them*: They wanted no Pardon. But we are to be consider'd as innocent, though we are guilty; and as not doing the many things that we have done. Now, by what Method, or upon what Foundation does he pronounce those to be righteous whom he knows to be sinful? *Fourthly*, *He makes him to be Sin for us, who knew no Sin, that we may be made the Righteousness of God in him.* So that here's a new way to Happiness, which would never have been known, had our Nature continu'd in it's primitive Purity.

O! What a Salvation is this, that comes from something else besides the Equity of the Legislator! What a Friend is our God who would not only have rewarded the Righteousness of our Works, but has employ'd himself upon a Scheme that imputes to us *Righteousness without Works*! we who were *afar off* are made *nigh by the Blood of Christ, for he is our Peace. He is our Hope.* Our way is *through the Vail, that is, his Flesh.* Is not this a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation? Sing aloud, ye waste Places of the Earth, the Lord has comforted his People, and made bare his holy Arm. Look upon your Happiness as a Thing projected by infinite Wisdom. Declare the Decree. 'Tis the Purpose that he purpos'd in himself. You now lay hold on eternal Life which God that cannot lye

Eph. ii. 14.

1 Tim. i. 1.

Heb. x. 20

Isa. lii. 9,

10.

SERM.
V.

promised before the World began. See your Portion in Heaven, not as a Thing that grew out of your Duties, as the Fruit of an imperfect Religion here, but as a Contrivance that was laid in one Eternity, and shall be perform'd in another. Your Holiness is not the Root of the Scheme, but one of the Branches. *God has from the beginning chosen us to Salvation thro' Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth.* This the Apostle admires, tho' he liv'd a long while before he felt the Design, *when it pleas'd God who separated him from his Mother's Womb to reveal his Son in him.* He has chosen his People to be rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom that he promis'd to those that love him.

2 Theſ. ii.
13.Gal. i. 15.
16.

Jam. ii. 5.

2. WE have the best Arguments for our Duty from the Incarnation, Satisfaction and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. *God has appointed us to obtain Salvation by Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.* These are Things People object against. A God manifest in the Flesh is call'd Nonsense, an Innocent Person's Suffering for the Guilty is an Injustice, and a Dead Man's rising again is an Impossibility. I answer, upon their Principles, that if these Things had been told us by any other than God himself, we might have join'd with them in a determin'd Infidelity. We could never have believ'd any of 'em upon less than a Divine Evidence. These Mysteries would have born all the hard Names that they give 'em, if we had receiv'd 'em any other way than by the Revelation of a God that cannot lie. But, if they are true, as every thing that he says must be, do but see what Good they do to the practical Part of Religion.

Rom. xvi.
25, 26.

We are establish'd by this Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, and the Revelation of the Mystery which is made manifest to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith. They that talk so much of Morality, can, in no Stories, give us those Example of it that we have in the Bible. What Acts of Justice and Mercy
do

do we find in the Lives of the Apostles? They could truly say, with an Appeal to the whole World, *We have wrong'd no Man, we have defrauded no Man.* But besides that, what Pains did they take? What Dangers did they run, in diffusing the Gospel? and, why was all this? Could they not have made as great a Figure without it? Yes, but it's evident they were Friends to the World, enlarg'd with Pity to their whole Nature; and therefore carried about with them what they thought was the way for Mankind to be happy. What was it that put them upon this, but one of the Mysteries that are recorded in my Text? *The Love of Christ constrains us, because we thus judge, that if one dy'd for all, then were all dead; and that he dyed, that they that live should not live to themselves, but to him that dyed for them and rose again.* You see here how they argue from the Story of a Saviour in its several Branches.

2 Cor. v.
14, 15.

The first Principle is, that Christ lov'd them. And the very Thoughts of that threw them into a sort of Convulsion; they are drawn and constrain'd by it, to make all their Lives a Tribute to him: This was not a Spirit of Enthusiasm, or a fanatical Vapour, but what they deduc'd in a Vein of cool and genuine reasoning: *We thus judge, that if one dyed for all, then were all dead.* This Love of his shows them what they were in themselves, impotent, unhappy; under a Sentence and preparing for an Execution. What a Reach of Mercy was this? He dy'd *that they who live should not live to themselves;* the Argument is very good, for they did not live by themselves; without him they had not liv'd at all; *but to him that dy'd for them,* to deserve their Duty, and rose again to employ it.

οὐκ ἔχουσιν

What is there like this in any other Collection of Precepts? How should we have had this Fire of the Altar, these Principles of zeal to our Duty, if Religion had contain'd none of the Mysteries that are

SER. M.
V.

Rom. vi. 3.
4. 6.

mention'd? All our Holiness is thrown into this sort of Language, *We are baptiz'd into Christ Jesus, baptiz'd into his Death; we are bury'd with him by Baptism into Death; and as Christ was rais'd up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, so we are to walk in Newness of Life. Our old Man is crucify'd with him, that the Body of Sin may be destroy'd.* The meaning of all these Phrases we have afterwards, *Sin shall not have Dominion over you, and the Reason why it shall not, is, because you are not under the Law, but under Grace.* Suppose God had told us all that he has now said about our Obedience, and given us none of these Arguments, what would the Consequence of that have been? Only making this World to be one of the Outer-rooms of Hell, where a sett of Creatures liv'd, who were taught indeed but not perswaded. Whereas the great Work of Grace is not only to make us a Knowing, but a *Willing, People in the Day of his Power.* Religion indeed has always been a Tribute to him that made us. *He has made us and not we our selves* is an universal Argument; but we find from all Experience that it will not do. 'Tis not the common Character of our Nature that the Apostle lays down. *No Man of us lives to himself, and no Man dies to himself.* It's what every one ought to say, that *if we live, we live unto the Lord.* But how comes it to be so with them in Fact? They know, *that to this End Christ both dy'd and rose again and reviv'd, that he might be the Lord both of dead and living.*

Pl. cx. 3.

Rom. xiv.
7. 8. 9.

3. We have the noblest Example of all practical Holiness from God's being manifest in the Flesh. As he taught the Law without the Darknes in which others had involv'd it, so he show'd it without any Corruption in his Life. *He did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth.* Hence he stands as the great Pattern; *be you Followers of me,* saith the Apostle, *as I am of Christ:* Now, this had never been,

1 Pet. ii.
22.

1 Cor. xi. 1.

if

if he had not come down into the Flesh, and dwelt amongst us. SERM.
V.

We are bid to be *followers of him as dear Children*. Eph. v. 1.
The Scripture has all along in the several Parts of Duty directed us hither. Thus when we are call'd to Humility, 'tis in the brightest view of that Grace and Practice; *let the same Mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, took on him the form of a Servant.* Phil. ii. 5, 6, 7. As an Evidence of this Principle we are to be patient, and to endure the Disorders of those to whom the Grace of God has been more sparing. *We that are strong are to bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.* Rom. xv. 1, 3. Why so? *Because Christ pleased not himself.* This is what he argued in his own Person, *let him that will be great among you be the Servant of all, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister: I am among you as one that serves.* Thus, when we are employ'd about that necessary Work of forgiving Injuries, whether there are Reasons for it in Nature, I shall not now examine, but I'm very sure the best of 'em must be fetch'd from Revelation. *We put on, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercy, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness and long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God has for Christ's sake forgiven you.* Col. iii. 12, 13. When we are exhorted to a gentle, easy, quiet Carriage, we learn it of him who is meek and lowly, and so find rest to our Souls. *Our Charity to those in Trouble looks to him as the great Example. Ye know the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his Poverty may be made rich. If he our Lord and Master wash'd their Feet, they ought to wash one anothers.* Mat. xi. 29; 2 Cor. viii. 9. He has given an Example, and we should do as he has done; and how strong is the Motive? *the Servant is not greater than his Lord, nor he that is sent, greater than he that sent him.* Joh. xiii. 14, 15, 16.

SERM.

V.

Heb. xii. 1,

2, 3.

εὐφρανέσθαι.

Heb. ii. 11.

Joh. xii. 26.

1 Joh. iv.

17.

Heb. x. 20.

Acts xvii.

27.

Heb. x. 19.

Don't say these Rules were sufficient without Examples; that's talking against all the Experience of our Nature. 'Tis not in vain that we are *compass'd about with a great Cloud of Witnesses*, but we look off from them, or rather look up above them, to *Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith: We consider him who endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest we be weary and faint in our Minds.* Our Religion is form'd in Similitude to him; *both he that sanctifies, and they that are sanctified are all of one, wherefore he is not ashamed to call them Brethren.* And it is practis'd in walking after him; *If any Man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my Servant be.* There's a Peace that flows in to us, not only from our keeping the Directions, but agreeing with the Example that is set before us: *Herein we have Boldness in the Day of Judgment, that as he was, so we are in the World.* What would have become of all this, if God was not manifest in the Flesh?

4. WE are in particular inclin'd and encourag'd to the Duty of Prayer, by this *new and living way that is consecrated for us through the Vail, that is to say, his Flesh.* This is the main Employment of Religion, and whatever helps it on must be of the greatest value to our Character and our Peace. We'll suppose that in all Nations there are some crying to him that made them. *They feel after him, if haply they may find him, for he is not far from any one of us.* Prayer is a Confession of Sin, a begging for Pardon, and any other Mercy that we want, and a Gratitude for those that we either have or hope for. But how heavily would this Work have gone on, if there had been none of these Mysteries in Religion?

In what manner must you have confess'd your Sins, if God himself had not given you *Boldness to enter into the Holiest of all by the Blood of Jesus?* What's the Difference between the Howlings of Conscience

science here, and that in Hell, if there's no Regard to pardoning Love? 'Tis upon this Ground that he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and cleanse us from all Unrighteousness. We can only say this from a Belief that there is a Blood of Sprinkling speaking better Things than the Blood of Abel.

SERM.
V.

1 Joh. i. 9.

Heb. xii. 24.

'Tis true, we may tell God our wants, but what hope have we of being supply'd? Strip the Duty of Prayer of all its relation to the Doctrines of the Gospel, and you take away its Arguments. The Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God. 'Tis because Jesus, the great Shepherd of the Sheep is passed into the Heavens, that we come boldly to the Throne of Grace, in hope of obtaining Mercy and finding Grace to help in every Time of need. We have an high Priest over the House of God, and therefore draw near with a true Heart, and a full Assurance of Faith. There's no coming to the Father but by him, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Prayer had been a heartless and helpless Work, if it was not for this Provision: But now we have Boldness of Access with Confidence through the Faith of him. If any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the Righteous.

Heb. vii. 19.

iv. 14. 16.

x. 21, 22.

Joh. xiv. 6.

Eph. iii. 12.

1 Joh. ii. 1,

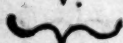
5. WE have the best Hope of succeeding in the whole Work of our Duty from the Redemption that is now establish'd. The Ground of all Religion is laid in this, that they who by a patient Continuance in well doing, seek for Honour, Glory and Immortality, shall have eternal Life. That they who do good shall come to the Resurrection of Life, and they that do evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation. But from whence have you any Encouragement this way, if you throw out the Promises of the Gospel, and the Mysteries upon which they are founded?

Rom. ii. 7.

Joh. v. 29,

Suppose I was to argue with a polite Heathen, and ask him why he does so much Good in the

SERM.
V.



World? he will answer, It is in hopes of a future Reward. Well, but how does he know this? I take it for granted, he will argue from God's Justice; that *he renders to every Man according to his Works.* Thus far 'tis very well, but the main Difficulty is yet to come. He cannot but find himself a Sinner, there's a great deal of his Duty that he has not done; and if the Justice of God rewards what is good, it must lay him under an equal Necessity to punish what is bad. If indeed I were pure and spotless, *I might lift up my Face before him,* but as it is not so, what is to become of me now?

To say that God will pardon, is really talking at random, out of the Gospel; that he will do so is true, but that's more than either they or any one else can know without a Revelation. If a Priest should assure them that their *Works* deserve eternal Life, yet he leaves an awaken'd Conscience uneasy, if he cannot tell them what becomes of their *Sins.*

Now, 'tis from the Satisfaction made by Christ that we see how our Happiness consists with all the Glory of God. That if we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us. In this Dispensation there's no room for Despair from the Greatness, the Multitude, and Aggravation of our Iniquities.

Isa. i. 18. If our Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow; if they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool. Our

—lv. 7. God will not only have Mercy, but abundantly pardon. The Heathen Religion, in the loosest way of teaching it, suppos'd a Merit in their good Works, to deserve a Reward for themselves, and a Pardon for their Vices. But this would only give Hope to the best among them. There's nothing in their way of thinking, like Salvation to the Chief of Sinners.

Ps. cxxx. 7. That we must know from the Gospel, that *with our God is plenteous, Redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his Iniquities.*

6. By these Mysteries the Principles of all practical Religion are enlarg'd and encourag'd. 'Tis in a Meditation upon these that we *stir up the Grace of God that is in us.* We are therefore *steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the Work of God, as we know that our Labour is not in vain in the Lord.* The Apostle argues this from the Resurrection of the dead in a very long Chapter. From hence he concludes that we ought to be *steady* in the Ways of God; nay, to *abound* in 'em, to do every thing better, be daily throwing more Life and Virtue into all our Duties. And thus we find it is in fact. We grow languid and dull, when our Thoughts withdraw themselves from the great Doctrines of Christianity. When *Peter* had mention'd the *Sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow*, he says in this View, we must *gird up the Loins of our Minds, and be sober and hope until the End.* 'Tis an Allusion either to Travellers or Racers, that put themselves into a Posture for all the length of their Journey, and all the Toil of their Course; and in that we are not only doing our Duty, but we *wait for the Grace that is to be brought to us at the Revelation of Jesus Christ*: Either the Revelation we shall have of him, or the Revelation we shall have by him: Either the Grace that he shews in himself, or the Grace that he brings to his People.

1 Cor. xv.

5, 8.

1 Pet. i. 11.

13.

7. We are by this means kept low in our own Eyes; as we find there are things above the Reach of Nature, and beyond the Comprehension of Faith. There's nothing we are apt to be more proud of than our Knowledge. *Vain Man would be wise.* We had rather be distinguish'd by what we *know*, than by what we *do*. This was the primitive Wickedness of our Nature. Our first Parents wanted nothing to make them more holy, that was not their Temptation; but they *saw the Tree was desirable to make one wise.*

Now God makes it manifest to the Sons of Men, they see that themselves are Beasts. He destroys the Wisdom of the wise, and brings to nought the Understanding of the prudent:

Eccl. iii. 18.

1 Cor. i. 19,

20, 21.

SERM.

V.

1 Cor. iii.
19.

dent: And in the work of Redemption we may say Where is the Wise, where is the Scribe, where is the Disputer of this World? Has not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? For, after that in the Wisdom of God, the World thro' Wisdom knew not God, (either their Wisdom was insufficient or opposite to that Knowledge) it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe. The Wisdom of this World is Foolishness with God.

It is easy to see what would have been the Effect of having no Mysteries in Religion. We may imagine that, from the Temper of the Men who say there are none. For *the preaching of the Cross is to them that perish Foolishness.* The Scorn which they pour out upon others, *the cruel Mockings* which they deal abroad among the People of God, against the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, is an Argument that the Religion they despise was contriv'd on purpose *to hide Pride from Man.* To those that look aright into it, it does so. If a Person talk in a diminutive Way of the mighty Ocean, and, because he has never seen it, imagine it was only like a large River, but that he could easily conceive where it begun, and where it ended; the best way would be to send him to Sea, and when he has been some time without sight of Land, he will learn to think and speak after another manner: Just so it is here; what a Sinner knows nothing at all of he can easily explain, but when the Grace of God gives him the Knowledge of the Truth, with that he finds his own Ignorance: The further he goes, the deeper it is. Like the Bow of the Sky that we imagine touches the Hill where it closes the Sight, but when we come there 'tis as far off as before. We cannot suppose ourselves to have apprehended, *but this one thing we do, forget what is behind, and reach to those things that are before.*

Phil. iii. 13.

8. THIS shews us the Necessity of depending upon the Spirit for Illumination, as well as upon Christ for Acceptance. We should never enquire after this Light,

if

1 Cor. ii.

12.

Eph. i. 16,

17.

Ch. iii. 14,

16, 18.

if there were not deep things of God. But this makes it the continual Employment of a Christian to call in Discoveries from above, that he may apprehend that for which he is apprehended of Christ Jesus. We receive not the Spirit of the World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. This is the great Blessing, for which the Apostle ceased not to make mention in his Prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ might give 'em the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of him. For this Cause he bow'd his Knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus, that he would grant, according to the Riches of his Glory, that they might comprehend with all Saints, what is the Breadth and Length and Depth and Height.

9. THIS teaches a greater Value for the Revelation God has made of himself. The Bible contains indeed the plainest Rules of Duty, for which we admire it; but there also we have the Wisdom of God in a Mystery. And if these are things that we know but in part, how much should we have been in the dark, had God said nothing at all about 'em? 'Tis a low jest, when we are laught at for admiring what we do not understand, and the Retortion is but just upon the People that make it, that if this is their Principle, we may conclude it's very little that they admire. For our parts, we read and adore, we see but thro' a Glass darkly; and we may say to one of them as *Elihu* did to a wiser Man, *Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous Works of God: Dost thou know when God disposed 'em, and caus'd the Light of his Cloud to shine? — Teach us what we shall say to him, for we cannot order our Speech by reason of Darknes.*

Job xxxvii.

14, 15,

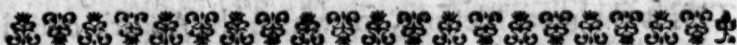
19.

10. THIS draws out our Desires towards Heaven; without which there can be neither the Purity nor the Comfort of Religion. We long to be where the Veil is taken off from the Object, and the Fetters from the Faculty. *We know in part, and prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done*

1 Cor. xiii.

9, 10, 12.

SERM. done away; now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then Face
 V. to Face. It does not appear what we shall be, but when he
 1 Joh. iii. shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as
 2. he is.



June 22.
 1718.

SERMON VI.



2 Tim. i.
 10.

ESIDES the Title of Mystery that is given to the Christian Religion, there are two Words more in this Verse. 1st, That it is a *great* Mystery. 2^{dly}, That it is so *without Controversy*. These are what I shall now enquire into, as they lead us to farther Views of that Doctrine which God has made to be the Glory of the best Dispensation that ever his People came under: The Report we have of him who has *appear'd to abolish Death, and bring Life and Immortality to light by the Gospel*.

[1.] WHEN the Apostle calls this a *GREAT Mystery*, I suppose he does it in a Way of Pre-eminence to what is contain'd in other Religions, more especially these two:

First, The Mysteries of the *Heathen*. These made a mighty Noise in the World. In particular the *Eleusian* Mysteries which were taught at *Ephesus*. To these no Persons were admitted till they had been train'd up five or seven Years in a Way of Preparation for them. They were so highly esteem'd that the Emperor *Adrian* went twice into those Parts to be acquainted with 'em, upon which I cannot but have a Suspicion of their being chang'd. These were then accounted the best Entertainments of Religion, and yet they who were brought into the Secret must never open their Mouths about

about 'em, but only make their boast of Privileges that to all others were unknown.

SERM.
VI.

Secondly, There were Mysteries in the Jewish Religion. God made his *wonderful Works to be remembered*. They thought of his *loving Kindness in the midst of his Temple*, and he was *terrible out of his holy Places*. Their *was the Glory*, which comprehended the Pillar of Cloud and Fire that secur'd their Marches thro' the Wilderness; and the great *Appearance* that was both the Guard and the Ornament of their Temple. Timothy, to whom this Epistle was directed had an Opportunity of hearing much about *both* these sorts of Mysteries. For as his Father was a *Greek*, and himself uncircumcis'd for many Years, so he could be no Stranger to those things of which the *Gentiles* always boasted. And, on the other hand, as his *Grandmother* and *Mother* were serious People, and *from a Child had brought him up in the Knowledge of the Scriptures*, so he was taught to admire all the true Mysteries in which God had revealed himself to the *Jews*. Well, the Apostle tells him, that here was a *Mystery greater* than what the one pretended to, and what the other really contain'd.

Pf. cxi. 4.
xlvi. 9.
lxviii. 35.
Rom. v. 4.

Act. xvi. 1.

2 Tim. i. 5.
iii. 15.

I. As to the Mysteries they made such a Noise of in their Temple at *Ephesus*, they are all outdone by our Gospel upon these four Accounts; that our Mysteries are learnt all at once, they refer us to our greatest Happiness, they come from God himself, and they are diffus'd over the whole World.

(I.) THE Mystery of Godliness is in this respect greater than any among the Heathen, in that we learn it *at once*. Here are no Years thrown away in a tedious Preparation. The Gospel is not acquainted with those wretched Arts of keeping People in Ignorance, as an Introduction to future Knowledge. No, no; *the Entrance of the Word gives Light*: It breaks in at once. *The People are all taught of God, and every one that hears and learns of the Father comes to Christ*. This *sure Word of Prophecy*, to which we do well to take heed, *shines as a Light*

Joh. vi. 45.

2 Pet. i. 19.

SERM.
VI.

1 Joh. ii. 8.

2 Cor. iii.

18.

He. viii. 11.

1 Joh. ii. 13.

Acts xxvi.

18.

Lu. xi. 52.

John i. 9.

Joh. xvii. 3.

Luk. ii. 14.

in a dark Place. All was Confusion before, but that's done away; the Darkneſs is paſt, and the true Light now ſhines. We all with open Face, beholding as in a Glaſs the Glory of the Lord are chang'd into the ſame Image from Glory to Glory. They ſhall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, ſaying, Know the Lord, for they ſhall all know me from the leaſt to the greateſt. The Fathers have known him from the Beginning, the little Children have known the Father. This is our firſt Benefit by the Miniſtry of the Goſpel. 'Tis appointed to open our Eyes, and turn us from Darkneſs to Light.

There's no keeping of People in a preparatory Dulneſs. That's plainly the Trick of coverous Men. And *wo to thoſe who take away the Key of Knowledge.* The Proceedings of Divine Grace are more generous; ſo that if the *Ephesians* boasted what Myſteries they had put themſelves into the way of learning, and that in the ſpace of a few Years they could know the great Secrets of Religion that were revealed no where elſe but in their Temple, *Timothy* had it in his power to demolish all that Confidence. He might tell 'em, that Chriſtiani-*an*ity had its Myſteries, which we come to know, without all that laborious Search, or running a vain Round for many Years. *The leaſt in the Kingdom of God* was acquainted, the firſt Moment of his Converſion, with a great deal more than they could pretend to. We have *the true Light that lighteth every Man that comes into the World.*

(2.) THIS Myſtery is about Matters of more Importance to our final Happineſs. *This is Life eternal to know the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom he has ſent.* Here we learn what all the Liberality of the Gentile Prieſthood neither could nor would have told us, that there's a Way of Redemption which brings *Glory to God in the higheſt, on Earth Peace,* and revealed a good *Will towards Men.* Here's a Doctrine fitted to the Tortures of an awaken'd Conſcience, and all the Entanglement of a guilty Nature. Here we are led to admire

mire what God has done to make us happy, with a **SERM.**
Glory to his Justice as well as his Mercy. **VI.**

They could never know God's Love to Man-
kind, whilst they were Strangers to him as *manifest*
in the Flesh. This is a nobler sort of Evidence of
his Regard to humane Nature than we can have in
all the Bounties of Creation and Providence. *God*
so lov'd the World, that he gave his only Begotten Son **Joh.iii.16,**
into the World, that whosoever believes in him should
not perish but have everlasting Life. How could they
imagine any Repairs to the Injuries of a broken Law
without a Satisfaction? And this they could never
apprehend, had not he who was manifest in the Flesh
been *justify'd in the Spirit.* Our Redemption is in *Christ*
Jesus, whom God has set forth to be a Propitiation through **Rom.iii.**
*Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Re-
24. 25,
26.
mission of Sins that are past, that he might be just, and the
Justifier of him that believes in Jesus. They must be
Strangers to all this till Christ Jesus was *preach'd unto the*
Gentiles, and believ'd on in the World. Nor could they
know where to rest their Confidence; what mighty Arm
was able to bear the Faith of a Soul: But we *know in*
whom we have believed, and that he can *save to the ut-*
termost, because he was *received up into Glory.* What
signifies it to have a Company of Secrets and Rarities
that make us neither better in our Practice, nor easier
in our Expectations? You see, the Wonders of the
Christian Religion are *no vain thing,* because they are
your Life. They begin the Life that is now your Prin-
ciple, they open and assure the Life that will be your
Portion.*

(3.) THESE Mysteries were given us by God him-
self. The long Time that the Heathen Religion
would keep us waiting, and the new sett of Doctrines
that were to be learnt every seven Years, had in it
all the Appearance of Artifice: It looks as like Priest-
craft as any thing in the World could do. But
God is the Rock; his Word is perfect, a God of Truth **Deu. xxxii.**
and **4.**

SERM.
VI.



and without Iniquity, just and right is he. There are none of these Frauds in the Discoveries to leave us uncertain about the Author.

The Prophets of old were not only mov'd by the Holy Ghost, but the Hand of God came upon them in such ways that others knew it was from the Lord. The Poor of the Flock that waited upon Zechariah knew it was the Word of the Lord. The Hand of the Lord God fell upon Ezekiel as he sat in his House, and the Elders of Judah sat before him. In the new Testament the great Preacher was our Blessed Saviour. His Enemies knew that he was a Teacher come from God, because no Man could do those Things that he did except God was with him. And as he begun to preach the great Salvation, so this was afterwards confirm'd to us by them that heard him. Nor do we depend only upon their Veracity, but God himself bare them Witness with divers Signs and Wonders, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own Will. They that receiv'd the Word, receiv'd it not as the Word of Men, but as it is in Truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe.

Zec. xi. 11.

Ezek. viii.
1.

John iii. 2.

Heb. ii. 3.

2 Thess. ii.
13.

Eccl. ix. 5, 6.

I doubt not, but the Priests among the Heathen would tell their Pupils, that all the Discoveries they made came from Heaven. Just as some do now who plainly promote the Gentile Religion under the Christian Name, and are not asham'd to abuse the World with ridiculous Stories of Saints and Angels appearing, nay, of the Virgin Mary's shewing herself to the Heroes of the little Factions among them: intruding into things which they have not seen, vainly puffed up in their fleshy Minds. We may confront these Fables, as we should do those of the Heathen, that it is unworthy of the Spirits of just Men made perfect, to come strolling from Heaven to Earth upon those childish Errands. For the Dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a Reward, for the Memory of 'em is forgotten, also their Love and their Harred and their Envy is now per-
rish'd;

rifi'd; neither have they any more a Portion for ever in any thing that is done under the Sun. They that die in the Lord do rest from their Labours.

SERM.
VI.

Rom. xiv.
13.

1 Joh. v. 10.

2 Cor. iv. 6.

Gen. i. 31.

Rev. xxi.
23.

The Revelation that God has given us is worthy of himself. It is the *Record about his Son*. It sets his own Perfections in the best Light for our Esteem and Worship. We never see the *Glory of God* so well as in the *Person of Jesus Christ*. This is the *greatest* thing that ever he did, as well as the best and kindest. This was more than making the World, and shows us his Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, moving in a nobler Design. When he separated the Light from the Darkness, the Waters from the Earth, appointed Time to make the first Division, and a Firmament the second, he *look'd on what he had done, and it was all very good*. But the Partitions that he makes between Light and Darkness in the Redemption of Mankind are more august and durable. Here Light and Darkness do not succeed and roll after one another as they do in our World; but are distributed into proper States and Regions. For his Enemies there, is a continual *Horror of Darkness*, and for those that are sav'd there is an *Inheritance with the Saints in Light*, where *their Sun shall no more go down, for there is no Night there, but the Glory of the Lord doth lighten the Place, and the Lamb is the Light thereof*.

(4.) THESE Mysteries are to be diffus'd and made known. The Obligation to keep all secret, which they learnt at the Temple of *Ephesus*, was cruel to the World, and could have no other Influence than to bloat with Pride and Vanity the People that had 'em. Thus they were render'd useless to the Creation, and only cumbered the Ground where they liv'd.

But is Christianity such a *vain Peculiar*? No, all they who have learnt the Things of God are to let their *Light shine before Men*. They must *hold forth the Word of Life*; they are to be *blameless and harmless as the Sons of God without Rebuke, shining as Lights in the World*.

Matt. v. 16.
Phil. ii. 15,
16.

Thus we read of *adorn[ing] the Gospel of God our Saviour*

Tit. ii. 9.

SERM.
VI.

1 Pct. ii. 9.

Pf. xl. 10.

in all Things. The whole Body of Christians are a *Royal Priesthood, a peculiar People to show forth the Praises of him who has call'd 'em out of Darkness into a marvellous Light.* 'Tis both their Duty and Inclination to call others into the Grace wherein they stand. In this Temper Christ is a Pattern to them, *I have not hid thy Righteousness within my Heart, I have not concealed thy Faithfulness and thy Truth.*

Thus may the Mysteries of Godliness be called *Great* in opposition to the vain Pretensions of the Heathen. What they boasted of was a needless Toil, and very oft a grand Impertinence. There were all the Suspicions of its being the Artifice of those that told it, and it left the People who receiv'd it as useless to the World as it found 'em. Whereas the Mystery of Godliness is *great* from the present Benefit that we have by it; from the Relation that it bears to our whole Felicity both in Earth and Heaven; from the Characters of a divine Original that are upon it; and from the Diffusion that it is to have abroad.

2. THERE were undeniable Mysteries among the *Jews.* God dealt with them as he had *not done with any other Nation.* They were call'd to *remember the marvellous things that he had wrought, the Wonders and the Judgments of his Mouth.* This was the peculiar Duty of the Seed of Abraham his Servant, and the Children of Jacob his Chosen: And yet in regard to these we may say *GREAT is the Mystery of Godliness.* There's a Distinction that God himself has given between the Wonders of the New Testament and those of the Old: They are more continuing, they refer us to themselves, they come in a nobler Way, and are attended with a greater Influence.

(1.) OUR Mysteries are distinguish'd from those that God gave to the *Jews*, by their Continuance. Theirs were only so many *Signs for the time present*: Ours, as the Apostle saith, are *not of this Tabernacle.* The very Temple itself is call'd by that Name, to shew that it was to be

Heb. ix. 9.
— xi.

be taken down : So that all the Wonders of the Place within the Vail, of the Mercy-seat upon the Ark, and the Cherubims of Glory shading it with their Wings, were limited. The Time would come when the Church of God should have nothing further to learn by 'em. The Law was but *our Schoolmaster to lead us to Christ*, and therefore were are now no longer under a Schoolmaster. But Christ is come an *High-priest of good Things to come by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, that is to say, not of this Building ; and not by the Blood of Bulls and Goats*, which had only a temporary Use, and a temporary Signification, but by his own Blood he has enter'd into the holiest of all, having obtain'd eternal Redemption for us.

Gal. iii. 24.

—25.

Heb. ix. 12.

13.

The High-priest's going into the Holy Place once a Year, with the Blood of others was a proper Emblem of the Way in which the Atonement was made, by an Officer of God's own appointing, and in a Method that shew'd his Satisfaction : But now the Sense of such a Ceremony is all over : If it was to be repeated again, we could not understand it. Whereas the thing signified carries in it an eternal Propriety, that *Christ having suffered for the Sins of many should go, not into the Holy Places made with Hands which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven itself, there to appear in the Presence of God for us. Here Men die that receive Tithes, but there he receives 'em of whom it is witnessed that he lives. He is made not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life. The Law makes Men Priests that have Infirmary, but the Word of the Oath that is since the Law makes the Son who is perfected for evermore. He has obtained a more excellent Ministry, by how much he is the Mediator of a better Covenant, which was established upon better Promises ; For if that first Covenant had been faultless, there should have been found no Place for the second ; for finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the Days come when I will make a new Covenant. In that he saith new Covenant he hath made the first old : Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away.*

Ver. 24.

Heb. vii 8.

—16.

—28.

πελαγωμεν
v.

Cha. viii. 6.

7, 8, 13.

SERM.
VI.

Heb. x. 4.

Jer. xvii.
12.

Pl. xlv. 8.

Heb. ix. 1.

ver. 10.

(2.) OUR Mysteries refer us to themselves. The *Jews* had a respect to something else. Tho' God had appointed those ceremonial Atonements and Purifications, yet that Maxim must have been always true, that *it is not possible the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sin.* What Proportion is there between the Sin of Man and the Blood of a Brute? And much less can a Sacrifice be a suitable Offering to the Justice of him who is a *Spirit*, and will be worshipp'd in Spirit and in Truth. But, as we are told the Law had a *Shadow of good things to come*, it still carried on the Thoughts and Expectations of the People to a *better Hope.* Their Temple was a *glorious high Throne*, as it was a Figure of the Body of Christ, in which *all the Fulness of the Godhead* was to dwell. Their Mercy-Seat above the Ark was a Type of our Throne of Grace. Their High-priest, who had been *call'd of God*, was covered with an *Ephod*, had a fair Mitre upon his Head, and a Breastplate with the Names of the Children of *Israel* upon his Heart. This was a Figure of Christ Jesus, all whose *Garments do smell of Myrrh, Aloes, and Cassia, out of the ivory Palaces, whereby they have made him glad.* Their Sacrifices were typical of his Death, and the Righteousness that he should bring in: Their *Jerusalem* of our Heaven. And without such a Reference as this all their Worship had been in vain. Hence the Apostle speaks with a Contempt of those things that had once a divine Institution; partly, because their Use was then over, and partly because they had never any other than a relative Goodness. Thus he calls it a *worldly Sanctuary*; and the Worship there, *weak and beggarly Elements, and carnal Ordinances impos'd upon 'em till the Time of the Reformatoin.*

Now the Mysteries of Christianity never carry us beyond themselves. We rest in the great Redemption itself, that God should be manifest in the *Flesh*, and justify'd in the *Spirit*: There's no going any farther: These are the very things that feed our Faith, and extend

tend our Hope. This was the Hope of the Promise made of God unto the Fathers, unto which the Twelve Tribes earnestly serving God day and night hoped to come.

SERM.
VI.

Acts xxvi.
6, 7.

(3.) OUR Mysteries come in a nobler Way: In a Method more agreeable to the lofty Nature of a rational Soul. God treats us now in the New Testament more like Spiritual Beings than he us'd to do his ancient People. We have nothing so gross as what the Apostle calls by the Name of carnal Ordinances, and the Rudiments of the World. Their Building of a Temple was an Emblem of the Incarnation, their offering Sacrifices of the great Atonement. And thus were their Minds instructed about the Method of God's restoring Man to himself. But now he has struck off all these carnal Conveyances from the Doctrine, and made it known by a Revelation that's more pure and divine; so that, what saith the Righteousness of Faith? not, who shall go into Heaven, to bring down Christ from above, or who shall descend into the deep to bring him from beneath? but the Word is nigh thee, even in thy Mouth and in thy Heart. If thou believe with thy Heart that Jesus dy'd, and confess with thy Mouth that God rais'd him from the dead, thou shalt be sav'd.

Rom. x.
6—19.

(4.) THIS Mystery is attended with a greater Influence, both as to Purity and Peace. The Law made nothing perfect, it still left 'em in a wrong Way about their Devotions, but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which Hope we now draw nigh unto God, in a Way that they could not use. So it was as to Comfort. In their Dispensation, those Sacrifices which they offer'd year by year continually could never make the Comers thereunto perfect, for then would they not have ceas'd to be offer'd? Yea surely, because the Worshippers once purg'd should have had no more Conscience of Sins; but in those Sacrifices there is a Remembrance made again of Sins every year.

Heb. vii.
19.

x. 1, 2, 3.

It is otherwise in the Christian Religion; for we are sanctified by the offering of the Body of Jesus Christ once for all: Every Priest stands daily ministering and offering of-

ver. 10.

SERM.

VI.

Heb. vii.

11, 12:

15, 17, 18.

19.

tentimes the same Sacrifices, which can never take away Sins; but this Man after he had offered one Sacrifice for Sins for ever sat down at the right hand of God. He had then done, and gone thro' the whole Atonement. Whereof the Holy Ghost is a Witness to us, in saying, their Sins and their Iniquities will I remember no more; now where Remission of these is, there's no more offering for Sin. And the Consequence of the whole is, that we have therefore Boldness to enter into the Holiest of all, by the Blood of Jesus.

Jer. x. 7. 8.

xvi. 19.

[2.] IT is further said that this Mystery is great without Controversy. There was room to dispute the Original of the Heathen Wonders; those which their Priests gave out. Men who lov'd to enquire into things could not be without their Suspicions, that Fraud in the Design and Confidence in the Revelation went a great way into those Pretensions. Among all the wise Men of the Nations and in all their Kingdoms there's none like to our God, but they are altogether brutish and foolish. They inherited Lies, Vanity, and things wherein there is no Profit. But here's a Mystery that all confess. Under this Head I shall observe four Things.

1 Cor. ii.

14.

i. 18.

1. IT does not mean there should be no Dispute about it. The natural Man never did, and never will receive the Things of the Spirit of God, they are Foolishness to him. The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish Foolishness. The Scripture has foretold this, and it is but in our Age as it has been in those before us; there is no new thing under the Sun. Three Causes may be assign'd for it.

2 Cor. x.

4. 5.

First, The Enmity that there is in our Nature to the Things of God. Till we are a willing People the Light will be grievous to us. One dram of Grace in the Heart is the best Battery against all those carnal Reasonings that we advance in Opposition to the Gospel: This pulls down the strong Holds and every Imagination, and brings all our high Thoughts
that

that exalt themselves against the Knowledge of Christ in Subjection to him. Our Understandings are vitiated as well as our Affections, and as there is a Principle that faith of God's Commands, *what a Weariness is it!* So there is another that faith what is as vile of his Doctrines *they are Foolishness being only spiritually discern'd.*

We see what Pains People will take to shift off a Duty, how many Excuses they find, what Delays they run into, and how cunning and copious a corrupt Nature is to express all it's Enmity against the Authority of God. Thus laborious is our Invention against a Mystery. We will except, sometimes to the Ground of a Revelation, sometimes to the Sufficiency of it, and again to the Use of it. Either it is not declar'd to us at all, or not with Evidence enough, or it is an Indifference whether we believe it or no. Thus much are People upon their Guard against the Knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus. If they cannot resist, they will flee; when they cannot shut out a Conviction, they will run away from it. Now, what can this be owing to, but the ill Turn that we got by the Fall? they who are dead in Trespases and Sins are *fulfilling the Desires of the Mind* as well as of the Flesh. It all proceeds from a hatred of God; and that is directed against his Wisdom as much as his Government. We can no more endure the Light that is about his Throne than the Greatness that fills his Law. The first Wickedness of our Nature consisted in a Love of some Wisdom that we were to get in our own way. From that time we have had a hatred of *the Wisdom that descends from above*, both as it is pure and as it is peaceable. So that, it is no Wonder that *they who do evil hate the Light*; that the natural Man who receives not the things of the Spirit of God should count them Foolishness.

Eph. ii. 3.

Joh. iii. 20.

SERM.
VI.

2 Cor. iv.

3. 4.

Rev. xii.

17.

2 Cor. xi.

3.

Rev. ii. 10.

2 Pet. ii. 1,

2.

Rev. xx. 8.

Secondly, The Scripture has given us another Reason of this, and that is the Influence of *Satan*. If our Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World has blinded the Eyes of them that believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the Image of the invisible God should shine into their Hearts. He was an early Enemy to our Lord: And what he was to his Person he will be to his Doctrine. The Dragon was wroth with the Woman, and makes War with the Remnant of her Seed, which keep the Commandment of God, and have the Testimony of Jesus. The Serpent who beguiled Eve through his Subtily endeavours to corrupt our Minds from the Simplicity that is in Christ. Christ came to destroy Satan's Empire, and therefore he takes the Alarm, and do as all that he can to resist the glorious Invader. As it is by the Gospel, that a Redeemer rides in the Chariots of Salvation, so we may expect the Enemy will use his Endeavours to disturb the Wheels; sometimes he does it by Superstition, leading out the Zeal of People into vain Things that cannot profit: Sometimes he pursues his Design by Persecution, *The Devil shall cast some of you into Prison, and ye shall have Tribulation ten Days*: And sometimes in a more direct Onset upon the great Mysteries of Godliness, teaching Persons to deny the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to bring upon themselves swift Destruction. He shall go out, and deceive the Nations which are in the four Quarters of the Earth.

Thirdly, I believe a great deal of this Opposition is owing to the Terrors of an uneasy Conscience. They dare not let this Faculty look into the Law of God, and therefore they set it a quarrelling with the Gospel. Thus Debauchery goes off into a Wrangling. These hard Questions are a Ball thrown to the Conscience, to keep it at play, and divert it from working and wounding within. 'Tis for this Reason, that several People who abhor the Practice of Religion

Religion profess themselves to be Champions against its Mysteries; and what a poor Delusion is this to secret Qualms, that such and such a Text is not in some antient Copies? What's that to those who *live as without a God in the World*, who *cast off Fear and restrain Prayer before God*? Is it not enough that they oppose Christianity in their Lives, but must they do it also in their Profession? 'Twill be of no avail to them another Day to plead the uncertain Authority of some Scriptures: That's no Excuse for Swearing and Immorality. All Copies agree in the Truth of those Words, *Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him Guiltless, who taketh his Name in vain.*

SERM.
VI.

2 Ep. ii. 12.
Job xv. 4.

Deu. v. 12

2. THIS Mystery is without Controversy to all the Ages of God's People. They have own'd it, and have done so practically. This has kept them humble in their own Eyes, and made them earnest for *the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of* what they don't understand. *They have acknowledg'd the Mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.* This has given them a Temper of Love to others. Any one that looks into the great Doctrines of Salvation will own, that the more he sees of their Mystery the less he is capable of persecuting those that don't believe them. He finds the Truth of the Observation, *No Man can say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.* He wonders not at the Ignorance of People and the Opposition that rises from it. It is only the Grace of God that has made it otherwise with him. The *Jews had a Zeal of God, but not according to Knowledge; for they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish a Righteousness of their own, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God. Even to this Day when Moses is read, the Vail is upon their Heart; and when they turn to the Lord, the Vail shall be taken away.*

Eph. i. 17.

Col. ii. 2.

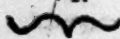
1 Cor. xii.
3.

Rom. x.
2, 3.

2 Cor. iii.
15, 16.

SERM.

VI.

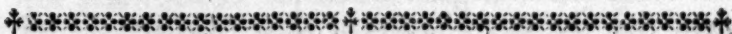


2 Tim. ii.

24, 25,

26.

A Person that guards a Mystery in the Christian Religion with penal Laws knows nothing what belongs to it. He that will force the natural Man to receive what he knows before-hand he cannot receive, is guilty of the same Crime with *Simon Magus*; He thought the Gift of God might be *bought*, and and these think it may be *sold*. This punishing of Heresy, and rewarding of Orthodoxy, is not teaching the Christian Religion as if it was mysterious. If we really apprehended, there was no knowing these things till God himself had open'd our Eyes, we should take every penal Law to be a Reproach upon him; and it's adding to the Misery of Sinners, if such as he marks out for *Darkness* in another World are to suffer *Persecution* in this. *The Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, apt to teach, patient; in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgement of the Truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are taken Captive by him at his Will.*

July 6,
1718.

SERMON VII.

3.

Gen. xviii:
16.

HIS Mystery is without Controversy to those whom the Grace of God has brought from the Darkness of Infidelity. They will say as *Jacob* did, *Surely the Lord was in this Truth, and I knew it not; this is the House of God, and this is the Gate of Heaven.* They give way to the sweet Excursions of Joy and Wonder. What they us'd to despise as meer Foolishness possesses and fills their

Esteem.

Esteem. And a Testimony from such People as these ought the more to be valu'd, because it shows us there's a Conquest of the Prejudice. *That which had not been told 'em have they seen, and that which they had not heard do they consider.*

SERM.
VII.

Isa. lii. 15.

I'll go no farther in the Search of Examples than the New Testament, which may be call'd *the Book of the Wars of the Lord*. There we see what Methods he took to show his Power, and prosper his Love. We find that the bare Preaching of the Word, without any Addition of Force, Temptation, or Interest has sunk down into the Hearts of Men. The *Jews* to whom the Cross was a *Stumbling-block*, and the *Greeks* that call'd it *Foolishness*, came to see that it was *the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God*. I may give you one Instance under each of these Heads.

1 Cor. i.
23, 24.

Of the former sort I look upon the Story of *Saul* to be the most eminent. His Contempt of Christ was fortify'd with *Jewish Learning*, and the Prepossession of a mighty Zeal for the Traditions of the Fathers. *He persecuted the Church of God above measure, and wasted it.*

Gal. i. 13.

He thought within himself that he ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth. Many of the Saints he shut up in Prison, and compelled 'em to blaspheme.

Acts xxvi.
9, 10,
11.

This shews us what a Turn his Prejudice gave him; that he put these poor People upon denying and deriding the great Doctrines of Redemption. As they were his Abhorrence, so he would make 'em *theirs*. *He was taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the Fathers, and was zealous towards God, persecuting this Way unto the Death, binding and delivering into Prisons both Men and Women.* But what a Renovation of Judgment did he come under? He was brought to see the Wisdom of a Design which before he hated. There was nothing that he so much valued as *the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord*. Formerly he saw no Glory in this Revelation: But now, *the unsearchable Riches of Christ* are what he regards with an

Acts xxii.
3, 4.

Phil. iii. 8.

Eph. iii. 8.

Esteem

SERM.
VII.

Eph. iii. 9.

ver. 10.

1 Cor. ii. 2.

Acts xvii.
33, 34.

Esteem in himself, and what he thought it his Honour to *preach among the Gentiles*. What he us'd to set at nought, he now endeavour'd to *make all Men see*, viz. *the Fellowship of the Mystery that from the beginning of the World has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ*. And tho' he once thought it beneath the Study of Men, yet now he sees, *that unto the Principalities and Powers in heavenly Places must be made known by the Church the manifold Wisdom of God*. He that was brought up at the Feet of Gamaliel, and after the most perfect manner of the Law, had been a Pharisee, desires to *know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucify'd*. What he took for Gain he found to be Loss, yea he *counted all things Loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord*. Here his Thoughts were entertain'd and his Affections employ'd. Tho' to him as well as others, the things of the Spirit had been Foolishness, yet from this intellectual Antipathy he comes to believe what he heard, to admire what he believ'd, and to improve what he admir'd: *following after, if he might apprehend that for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus*.

The other Instance that I promis'd to give you was from the *Heaven*; and you will find that the Grace of God was *exceeding abundant towards them, with Faith and Love which are in Christ Jesus*. Their Learning bows itself as *Dagon* did before the Ark; it falls flat, and breaks to pieces. Tho' at *Athens* they had all the Scorn that could be for the Person and Doctrine of the Apostle, yet *some of 'em believ'd*, when they heard him more fully upon the Revelation that he brought among 'em. They that call'd him a *Babbler*, and a *Setter forth of Strange Gods* are said to *cleave unto him* upon his telling them that *God had appointed a Day in which he would judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordain'd, whereof he has given assurance to all Men in that he rais'd him from the Dead*. It was Jesus and the Resurrection which they call'd by the Name of strange Gods before; and yet now they saw the Wisdom and Empire

Empire of the divine Nature in that Contrivance ; that it gave us Notions worthy of a God, and fitted to a Soul.

SERM.
VII.

But the most eminent Instance of this kind we read of at *Ephesus*, where *the Name of the Lord was magnify'd, and many that believed came and confessed, and shew'd their Deeds* : *Many of them also who us'd curious Arts brought their Books together, and burnt 'em before all Men, and they counted the Price of 'em, and found it to be fifty thousand Pieces of Silver ; so mightily grew the Word of God and prevail'd*. The People here describ'd were got into such an engaging Study as would give 'em an Opinion that they had something wiser in their own keeping than these Apostles could teach 'em. And yet you see what Havock and Destruction the Grace of God carried into all that sort of Learning. *They confessed and shew'd their Deeds* ; that they were vain and vile, foolish and wicked ; nay, they *brought their Books together*, as if they had agreed in a common Act of Reproach upon the Science itself : *They burn'd 'em before all Men* ; tho' with what Expence and Care they had collected 'em, you see by the Price they came to, which was fifty thousand Pieces of Silver, that is, about fifteen hundred Pounds. If any People had it in their Power to detect the Weakness and Fraud of the Christian Doctrine, it must be these Men ; and therefore when they give such a public Witness to the Truth of Religion, it comes after a fair Trial. *They turn'd from Idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from Heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the Wrath to come*. These Ephesians are brought to comprehend with all Saints, *what is the Height, Length and Breadth and Depth, and to know the Love of Christ that passes Knowledge, and be filled with all the Fulness of God*.

Acts xix.

17, 18,

19, 20.

1 Thes. i.
10.

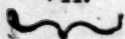
Eph. iii.
18, 19.

4. THIS is a Mystery without Controversy, because it still continues to be a Mystery after all the ways that Men have taken to explain it. Our Faith, is often *beguiled by Philosophy and vain Deceit, after*

Col. ii. 8.

the

SERM.
VII.



the Rūdiments of the World, and the Commandments of Men, and not after Christ. We are in Danger of being *spoil'd* with it. There has been many an Insult upon Revelation from the Fancies of Men, but God has usually blasted them. They have set their Threshold by his Threshold, and their Posts by his Post. They have cast the Doctrine of Religion into barbarous Moulds. *From whence have we had our Wars and Fightings,* but from the Lusts of the Mind as well as those of the Flesh?

Jam. iii. 17. *The Wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable; the Wisdom of the Schools is neither; first, 'tis muddy, earthy and polluted, and then it is fierce and quarrelsome.*

What a Bandage of hard Words have they given to the Doctrine of Justification, till they have almost distinguish'd it out of the Church? And after all their laborious Niceties, it will never be better understood than by God's own Account of it; that *he has set forth him to be a Propitiation for our Sins through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness in the Remission of Sins that are past, that God may be just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* There's more in one Breath and Sentence of the Bible, than in all the voluminous Disputations that have rais'd such a Dust in the World. That, *he died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God:* That, *the Lord laid on him the Iniquity of us all:* That, *the Messiah was cut off, but not for himself:* That, *he bare the Sins of many:* That, *God has in Christ Jesus reconcil'd us to himself, not imputing our Trespases to us, but made him to be Sin for us who knew no Sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him.* These are as plain as Language can make the Thing: The Difficulty here lies not in the Words but in the Doctrine itself; and that being the Counsel of God, it must be mysterious. We can never by searching find it out to Perfection. But I'm sure the Way to bring it down to our Conceptions is not to strip it of the Phrase that God has given it, and cloath it with our own.

Rom. iii.
25, 26.

1 Pet. i. iii.
18.

Isa. liii. 6.

Dan. ix.
26.

Isa. liii. 12.

2 Cor. v.
19, 21.

own. It's never the plainer for any of those little Arts. And we find by the *vain fangling* to which some turn aside, that they *neither understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm.*

Explaining a Mystery must be quite wrong. 'Tis best to keep it in its own Language, and not utter *Words hard to be understood.* It's at least a daring Practice; not treating it as a Mystery, but throwing it into a Rumble of Sounds. For these Reasons I could wish that Saying had not obtain'd among Divines that the Father is the *Fountain of the Deity.* This is a Nicety that we have *nothing in Scripture* to lead us into. 'Tis being *wise above what is written,* and exercising ourselves in *things too high for us.* After all the Pains that Men have taken to make these Doctrines intelligible to Reason, which is indeed to degrade 'em from their Mystery, we see 'tis in vain: For still *without Controversy* great is the Mystery of Godliness. I have no more to do from this part of my Subject than to give you a few practical Directions about the Use that should be made of Mysteries in Religion.

1. IF you would treat Christianity, or any particular Article as a Mystery, be careful to separate the Doctrine from all the Mixtures that Curiosity or Superstition have brought into it. Ministers should not come to you with *Excellency of Speech or Knowledge in declaring to you the Gospel of God.* 'Tis certain that these matters could never be known if the Spirit that searches all things had not reveal'd them. Our Faith stands, *not in the Wisdom of Man, but in the Power of God.*

2. READ the Scriptures diligently, comparing *spiritual Things with Spiritual.* Be able to know what Phrases are us'd there, and what are of foreign Extraction. Where there is an awful Darkness in one Text, endeavour to see the way into it by the easier Light of another. And observe the great Design of Scripture, upon which God has put that Book into your Hands; take the general Scope of it along with you.

SERM.
VII.2 Pet. iii.
17.

Isa. xxxv. 8.

1 Pet. ii. 2.

Dan. xii. 4.

2 Tim. iii.
ult.

you. 'Tis lamentable to see with what Fury Persons can push their Opinions who are not able to bring one Verse of the Bible into their Argument.

That there are Difficulties in these *lively Oracles* is what we are not ashamed to own. As they come from a God *who only has Immortality, and dwells in that Light to which no Man can approach*; as they consist of matters that relate to an unseen World, 'tis no wonder that the *Unstable and Ignorant do wrest them to their own Destruction*, and that the best Believers are fill'd with a holy Admiration. But I am far from thinking that the Design of revealing these Things that are so *hard to be understood*, is that we may have a Dependence upon our Teachers, and receive all that they will please to give us. The Learning of Ministers is one of those Means that God has blest to the Enlightening of the World; a Skill in the original Languages, and an acquaintance with eastern Customs are mighty Helps to find out the Sense of many Passages. But, it's plain that the Book is design'd for all People. In the Days of the Son of Man it is promis'd, that *there shall be a way of Holiness so easy, that way-faring Men though Fools shall not err therein*. The Entrance of God's Word gives a Light that makes Wise the Simple. There's no Necessity for all Persons to know the critical Meaning of every Text: They may *desire the sincere milk of the Word and grow thereby*; They may see enough for their Edification and Comfort, though they are still unacquainted with many Beauties in the Phrase and Argument. We know that the mere Bible it self without any Explanations has been attended with a Blessing. Thus it was at the Reformation, *many run to and fro with a few Leaves of the Book, and so Knowledge was increased*. Therefore, *let the Word of God dwell richly in you*. 'Tis thus that ministers are made perfect, *thorowly furnish'd to every good Work*.

3 ATTEND

3. ATTEND the Ordinances of the Gospel. *He that walks with wise Men shall be wise.* This Method God has bless'd for the opening of our Eyes, and turning us from Darkness to Light. I am no way surpriz'd at the the strong Delusions that obtain among us; we see them in Men that receive not the Love of the Truth. How should they possibly be in the right, who throw off all Worship, are Aliens to the common Wealth of Israel, and live as without a God in the World? The Apostle observes, *He that is of God hears us; He that is not of God hears not us; hereby know we the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error.* Thus all Ages were Believers built up in their most holy Faith.

I don't tell you, (and I dare say there is not one among you supposes that I would be guilty of it) that you are to trust any Ministers by an implicit Faith; but this Liberty in your selves is no Argument against the Ordinances of the Gospel. We are to use our Liberty as the Servants of God. It's observ'd of the Bereans, whose Evangelical Nobility can never be too much remember'd and admir'd, that they receiv'd the Word with all Readiness of Mind, though they search'd the Scriptures daily whether the Things were so or no. When our Blessed Saviour received Gifts for Men, among the rest, he gave them Pastors and Teachers: and this was, for the work of the Ministry, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith to the Knowledge of the Son of God; that we henceforth be no more Children, toss'd to and fro by every Wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in Wait to deceive. We see by Experience, that the humble Christian who waits at Wisdom's Gates does visibly advance; there is in him a discernable Increase of Grace, and of the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And on the other Hand, the brighter Parts and greater Learning of People either deadens

H

into

SERM.
VII.

Acts xxvi.
18.

2 Thess. ii.
10.

1 Joh. iv. 6.

1 Pet. ii.
16.

Acts xvii.
2.

Eph. vi. 11,
12, 13,
14.

2 Pet. iii.
tit.

SERM.
VII.

into Dulness, or sows into Error, when they neglect the Means of improving it. *He that has, to him shall be given, and from him that has not, shall be taken away, even that which he seemed to have.* The Light that is in him shall be Darknes, and then, *how great is that Darknes?* If, therefore, you would hold Heb. x. 25. *fast the Profession of your Faith without wavering, forsake not that assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is, but consider one another to provoke unto Love and good Works; that ye may abound in Wisdom, and increase more and more.*

4. PRAY for the Spirit. Though this is the greatest Gift, yet you may ask it with the greatest Luk. xi. 13. Hope. *For if ye being evil know how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Desire that by his Light you may be conducted into the true Sense of Scripture and the real Benefit of Ordinances; That, when you read the word of God, you may see the wondrous Things contain'd in his Law; and, when you come into the Assemblies of his People, you may walk in the Light of the Lord. We have receiv'd, not the Spirit of this World, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may have the Things that are given to us of God. Ye have an 1 Cor. ii. 12. *Uction from the holy one, and ye know all Things.*

In order to this, take Care that you do not grieve the Spirit: This includes the utmost guard over your 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. *Tempers, laying aside all Malice and Guile, and Hypocrisy and Evil speaking, receive the sincere Milk of the Word.* An angry furious Man is out of the way of Truth and Peace, because he is doing Violence to him whose Office it is to lead us into the Way of all Truth. Jam. i. 19, 20, 21. *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, let every Man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to Wrath; for the Wrath of Man works not the Righteousness of God: Wherefore lay apart all Filthiness and Superfluity of Naughtiness, and with Meekness receive the ingrafted Word, which is able to save your*

your Souls. We are bid to *Speak the Truth in Love*, SERM. VII.
not only as it is the best way of convincing others,
but of nourishing our selves; for thus *we grow up*
unto him in all Things, who is the Head even Christ Eph. iv. 15.
Jesus. A Person who indulges himself in Ungodly

Passions *holds the Truth in Unrighteousness*: He stops
the Circulation in the mystical Body; He will be a
wither'd Branch; He does not derive fast enough
from Christ Jesus: His Soul cannot thrive in the
Courts of the Lord. He is like a Thistle by the
sides of a Vine that may be said to defend it,
bur draws no manner of Virtue from it. Do you
therefore believe that nothing but the Scripture is
the Rule, and none but the Holy Spirit is a suffici-
ent Teacher, and that it is your utmost Concern,
not to forfeit and grieve away all the Instruction that
you stand in need of? *The Meek will be guide in* Ps. xxv. 9.
Judgment, the Meek will be teach his way. You must
buy of Christ Gold tried in the Fire, and anoint your Rev. iii. 18.
Eyes with his Eye-salve, that you may see.

5. TAKE care of quarrelling about these Myste-
ries, and becoming vain in your Imaginations. The Do-
ctrines of the Christian Religion were never given
us to furnish a Campaign. But *the Fruit of Righte-* Jam. iii. 18.
ousness is sown in Peace of them that make Peace. They
are not only of a sublime but an useful Nature. As
for Example, it is a very little matter to be train'd
up in the best way of conceiving and delivering the
Doctrine of Justification; to do it without the Fraud
of Hereticks, and the Trash of Schoolmen: This
will be of no Consequence to one who is yet in
his Sins, and has the Wrath of God abiding on him.
'Tis more my Business to have the Privilege than
barely to know the Truth, that I may have *strong*
Consolation in fleeing for a Refuge to the Hope that is Heb. vi. 16.
set before me. 'Twas a great Thing that our Saviour
said of the Publican, that *he went down to his House* Luke xviii.
justify'd. Carrying the Mercy of Justification along
14.
H 2 with

SERM.
VII.

Plal. xxxii.
1, 2.

with us is more than carrying away the Doctrine. The main thing is to have it go with us to our Houses. *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is cover'd; Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputes not Iniquity.* God has reveal'd to us the way of Salvation by Jesus Christ, not to set us a quarrelling about the manner of declaring it, but that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having on our own Righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is by the Faith of the Son of God.

Phil. iii. 8,
9.

2 Thef. ii.
10.

6. BE more concern'd about the improving of a Mystery than the explaining it. Enquire upon a Head of Revelation, not only, what is there for me to know, but what is there for me to do. *Receive the Love of the Truth that you may be saved.* What a poor Business would it have been for Noah's Sons to fall a disputing about the shape and convenience of the Ark, when the Waters were rolling after them? Their Concern was to get within it, and so to be saved. This practical way of regarding a Truth is the Means of giving you a greater Knowledge. As our Saviour observes, *if any Man does his Will, then shall he know the Doctrine whether it is of God, or I speak of my Self.* If what God has reveal'd to you about his Nature is mysterious, let it employ your Adoration. *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his ways are past finding out? Who has known the Mind of the Lord, and who has been his Counsellor! For of him, and to him, and through him are all Things, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.*

Joh. vii. 17.

Rom. xi.
33, 34,
36.

SER-



SERMON VIII.

July 20.
1718.

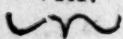
I TIM. iii. 16.

----- *The Mystery of* GODLINESS.

HIS Word gives us the third general Character of the Christian Religion. The first was, that it is the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, what the Faith of Mankind may rely upon with Confidence : And the second is like unto it, that it is a *Mystery*, to employ all your Affections of Delight and Wonder ; and, now, lest any People should think, they are only to be confus'd with airy Speculations, we are told, in the third Place, that it reaches the *Practice*, and fills our Duty as well as our Thoughts. 'Tis to make us wiser and better, and hence it is called the *Mystery of Godliness* : Which takes into it these three Things :

1. It agrees to the main Design of Godliness.
2. It has a Tendency to promote it ; nay,
3. It has the best Influence upon it. And in each of these Particulars, it is distinguish'd from those Mysteries that are not of divine Original ; such as wicked Men have contriv'd, and foolish ones believ'd. Their coming is *after the working of Satan, with all Powers and Signs and lying Wonders, and with all Deceivableness of Unrighteousness in those that perish ; upon whom God has sent strong Delusions that they should believe a Lye.*

² Thess. ii.
9, 10, 11,

SERM.
VIII.

I. THERE'S nothing in the Mysteries of Religion inconsistent with Holiness to God and Beneficence to Men. They are not contriv'd to take People off from their Duty, to make them vain in themselves and useless to others. There is not one Principle of Piety or Charity that suffers by them. They do not break in upon any *Law of Liberty*. And this is more than can be said of the lying *Wonders* that some have obtruded upon us.

In this Comparison I will not lead you very far abroad, but give you a view of the Christian Religion and those Mysteries that are in it, as they appear to be of quite another Nature from the Inventions of Men. The opposite Instance that I shall bring is the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. I have frequently heard and read that boast of the Papists, that there is as good an Argument for this as there is for the *Trinity*; and that no Objection can lie against the one, which may not with as much Force be applied against the other. This I think may be easily dissolv'd, if it was not out of the way of my Subject. I could show you that there is a great Difference between establishing a Doctrine by the Decrees of Men and receiving it upon the plain Grounds of a Revelation; and that it is much easier to find a Similitude or a Metaphor in that Saying, *This is my Body*, than it can be in the other, *These three are One*; and that in a Case which is plainly within the Reach of my Senses, I may safely use 'em, but when the Matter is confessedly above 'em, I ought to believe without 'em: Because this is what *no Man either has seen or can see*. But as I said, the Pursuit of those Answers would make me wander too far from my Text.

1 Tim. vi.
16.

I will therefore run the Comparison between the two Doctrines upon the Head of their Consistence with practical Religion. 'Tis easy to see how much the Peace and Purity of my Life are promoted by a Belief of this, that *there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are*

1 Joh. v. 7.

are one: That God was manifest in the Flesh, and justified in the Spirit. The Divinity of a Saviour is a mighty Argument for the Dependence of my Soul upon him. 'Tis from this, that I can trust in his Merit, and be always looking at his Intercession; because, *as he continues for ever, he has an unchangeable Priesthood.* On this Account we perform our Duty to him with the rest of his People, *calling on the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord, and ours.* We are *under the Law to Christ.* If he was not God, I would not honour the Son as I honour the Father, nor as I believe in God, so believe in him. There could be no Peace of Conscience without a Sense of Pardon and the Hopes of a Protection: Now, *He is therefore able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever lives to make Intercession for them.* And the same happy Conclusions may be argued from the Divinity of the HOLY SPIRIT. He that *creates us anew in Christ Jesus,* He that *comforts us in all our Tribulations,* He that *helps our Infirmitie*s in Prayers, He that *guides us into the Land of Uprightnes*s can be no less than a God. In these Cases we are said to be *all taught of God.* If that is his Title, I cannot over-do it in my Expectations from him. He is *able to make all Grace abound towards me.* I believe a Victory over my Corruptions as well as a Pardon for them. That tho' all my Pains cannot destroy the Seeds of Pride and Passion and Worldly Mindedness, yet *the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* We are *chang'd from Glory to Glory by this Spirit of the Lord.*

But now, What is there of this in the Doctrine of Transubstantiation? What am I better for it, either in my Hope or Practice? Don't we plainly see that it eats out all Religion? There's more Adoration paid to the consecrated Wafer, than there is to any thing else; bowing before it, looking upon it,

Heb. vii.
24.

1 Cor. i. 2.

ix. 21.

Joh. v. 23.

—xiv. 1.

Heb. vii.
25.

Eph. xi. 10.

2 Cor. i. 4.

Rom. viii.

26.

Pf. cxliii.

10.

2 Cor. iii.

SERM.
VIII.

giving it the lowest homage: Now, this is more than is owing even to the Body of Christ Jesus himself; *That* was never the Object of a religious Reverence, being no other than a Creature. So that, though the Words of the New Testament were to be taken in the *Popish Sense*, they would not put us upon any act of Adoration. Saying *this is my Body* is no Argument for me to fall down before it, unless he had said, *this is my Divinity*; here I am *as a God*. Calling it *his Body*, expresses no more than the humane Nature: And, therefore, if it is possible to change the Bread into *That*, yet it is Idolatry to bow down before it. So that, this Mystery of *Theirs*, strikes at the Root of all practical Religion, by giving divine Worship to *that which is not God*. And the Consequence of this is the drawing off their Thoughts, their Joy, their Dependence from the infinite Nature, where alone they ought to be fix'd. 'Tis said of the *Man* Christ Jesus, *that by him we believe in God*, that *he offer'd himself to God*. But this Practice is in them as well as the Heathen a *worshipping and serving the Creature more than the Creator who is over all God, blessed for evermore*. He tells us in the second Commandment, that he is a *jealous God*, and it is upon this very Consideration that the Apostle argues against all humane Fancies at *the Lord's Table*; *do we provoke the Lord to Jealousy, are we stronger than he*? Shall we *even there* prostrate our selves to any but the most High? Shall we make an Idol of the greatest Blessing that he has given us; and defraud him of the Honour that is due to himself alone, for the sake of that lower Nature, that he was pleas'd to take upon him? Thus you see, how the Belief of this Doctrine, and the whole Practice of their Church are inconsistent with that Principle that lies at the Heart of all Religion, that God alone is to be worship'd.

1 Pet. i. 21.

Heb. ix. 14.

om. i. 25.

Cor. x.
29.

2. THE Doctrines of Christianity have a Tendency to promote all Godliness. They are given upon that very Design. In another Place it is call'd *the Doctrine according to Godliness*, that's fram'd by the same Model with it. These Things are revealed on purpose to turn *our Feet into the way of Peace, to give Light unto them that sit in Darknes, and in the Shadow of Death.* Nay, besides the Homage that must be paid to God, we have a mysterious Religion that makes us useful to the World. You see upon what view *Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel.* He there lays down the original Principle of Revelation, that *the Love and Kindness of God our Saviour towards Man appear'd, not by works of Righteousness that we have done, but according to his Mercy has he saved us, by the working of Regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that we being justify'd by his Grace, may be Heirs according to the Hope of eternal Life.* And what is all this for? Only to throw us into a Method of individual Piety? No, but to make us of Service to others. *This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believ'd in God may be careful to maintain good Works; these Things are good and profitable unto Men.* The Reason he gives in the next Words why we are to avoid foolish Questions and Genealogies, and strivings about the Law is because *they are unprofitable and vain.* They do no manner of good.

This may be truly affirm'd of Transubstantiation; it is an *useless* Mystery, as much against *Peace upon Earth*, as it is against *Glory to God in the highest.* It shows *no good will towards Men*, but is plainly a *Cloke of Coveteousness*, for a Priest first to lead you into the Dark, and then to rob you. It *changes the Glory of the incorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man.* The manner of pressing it, is, like it self,
unchristian,

SERM.
VIII.

1 Tim. vi.

3.

Luk. i. 19.

Tit. iii. 4. 5.

Rom. i. 23.

SERM.
VIII.

Jam. iii. 17.

unchristian, earthly, sensual, and devilish. They do not recommend it, as they would the *Wisdom that descends from above*; for that being *first pure*, it would be also *peaceable, gentle and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits*. Whereas, there never was, that I can hear, any common Temper shown in the Service that is paid to this pretended Body of Christ: They *speake perverse things* about it; Humane Decrees have establish'd it upon humane Penalties; 'tis safer contradicting any Article of Religion than *that*. Inquisitions, that carry in their Bowels all the Varieties of Cruelty, are a Trench set about this Doctrine.

Jude ix.

If they would *dispute about the Body of Jesus*, as Michael the Archangel did *about the Body of Moses*, they must *bring no railing Accusation*; but they use worse Language to their Brethren than he did to the Devil. 'Tis very different from the Methods of the Gospel, when Objections are answer'd by Racks and Fires. Nay, where the Laws have restrain'd them from these Severities, there cannot be a Procession of the Host, without a *Church Mob*, insulting all those that don't come into their Idolatry. And what a confus'd Assembly must that be, that are zealous both in Adoration and Violence; that is equally a House of Prayer, and a Den of Thieves? One Party falling down themselves, and another Party knocking down others; and this in the greatest Solemnity of their Worship? As if a more extraordinary Devotion could not be carry'd on, but in this jumbled way, by the Superstition of their Bigots, and the Insolence of their Bullies. Their Procession in celebrating his Death is not unlike that of the *Jews* in contriving it. *Judas one of the Twelve came, and with him a great Multitude with Swords and Staves, from the chief Priests and Elders of the People.* Such Offerings as these, are fitter for *Moloch* than for *Jesus*. The Former indeed allow'd all this, but of the Latter it is observ'd that his Carriage was the reverse to these

Mat. xxvi.

47.

these riotous Devotions, for *he did not strive, nor try, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Streets.* And he will be serv'd in his own way. The Apostle gave a very different Account of himself from what these Sons of Violence can pretend to, *they found me purify'd in the Temple neither with Multitude nor with Tumult.* These Confusions are the Fruit of that vile Doctrine, and by their Fruits we are to know 'em,

SERM.
VIII.

Mat. xii.

19.

Act. xxiv.

12.

3. THE Mysteries of Religion have not only a Tendency to promote Godliness, but they give the best Influence to it. It never prospers so well as under the Impressions of this Faith. *It is the Spirit that quickens, the Flesh profits nothing, these Words of God they are Spirit and they are Life.* Morality without Revelation is starv'd and wither'd; it wants either more Vigour or more Comfort. But *they that are planted in the House of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God.* Here I shall endeavour to do these two Things.

Joh. vi. 63.

Pl xcii. 10.

1. GIVE you some Account of this Godliness; and

2. SHOW you how the Mysteries of Religion have a happy Influence upon it.

1. WHAT is the Godliness here mention'd? Looking into this will give us an Argument of those Doctrines that promote it. If we find, that the Practice they put us upon is the most useful to our selves and others, we shall the more esteem them. I take the Word *εὐσέβεια* to be of great Extent, and to include the whole of our Duty, though it has the nearest Relation to what lies between us and God. In particular, it signifies our Worship of him, our Likeness to him, our Communion with him, our Expectations from him, our Regard to his Institutions, our love to his People, and our Usefulness to his Creatures. These are so many Beauties of Holiness, and Ornaments

SERM.
VIII.Rom. xiv.
18.

ments of Practice. *He that in these Things serves Christ is acceptable to God, and approv'd of Men.* And you will find they sink and die when we abate of our Relish for the Mysteries of Religion. No sort of People are so grossly deficient in their Morals as they that despise the Doctrines of Christianity.

I. ONE Article of Godliness, and indeed the chief of them, is that we should bow down, *and worship before the Lord our Maker.* When God looked from Heaven, upon that enquiry, to *see if there were any that did understand and seek him,* the Report is that *they are altogether become filthy, there's none that does good, they eat up his People as they eat Bread, and do not call on the Lord.* It is the Unhappiness of the Heathen World, that they are *alienated from the Life of God through the Ignorance that is in them:* Or, if they know God, they glorify him not as God, but become vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart is darkned. Our Saviour tells the Samaritans that *they worship'd they know not what.* But the most lamentable account is that which the Apostle gives, that these People are *without Christ, aliens to the Commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of Promise, having no hope and without a God in the World:* paying no respect to him who was their Author and will be their Judge; never feeling after him, if haply they might find him. But acting as if they carry'd brutal Souls in humane Bodies.

This is the first Thing that the Grace of God does, it brings us to our Knees. *Men and Brethren what shall we do to be saved?* Was the Cry of those who a little before were hardned against all Salvation, and had the utmost Contempt of the Means that God appointed for it. The Jailor, whose Conscience was cover'd with a Brawniness, Braveness from his calling, comes trembling with the same Question. 'Tis observ'd of *Saul,* that he quickly fell to this work, *behold he prays.* It may be they who led him by the Hand to Damascus,
knew

Acts ii. 37.

Acts ix. 11.

knew not what he was doing; they only beheld him a miserable Object, a moving Spectacle that could not lye and durst not eat for three Days and three Nights; but in this heavy Darknes he found his way to the Throne of Grace. His desires were feeding and fetching from above, though he made such a sad Figure to those about him.

This is Godliness: *If you call on the Father who without Respect of Persons will judge every Man according to his work, pass the Time of your sojourning here in fear, as those that are born not of the corruptible Seed, but the incorruptible.* This is the great Business of Religion to seek the Lord whilst he may be found, and call upon him whilst he is near. There's no Piety without this. Let not any deceive themselves, Religion does not consist so much in talking of God as in talking to him. *With my Soul have I desir'd thee in the Night, saith the Prophet, and with my Spirit within me I will seek thee early. The way of the Just is Uprightness;* that is, his Habit, his Choice, his Course, his Inclination, and *thou most upright dost weigh the Path of the just.* 'Tis under thy notice, and it is directed to thy Throne. There are all manner of Considerations that should move us to this; the debt we owe to a Creator, the necessity that is upon us from the daily Deficiencies of Life, and more especially the interest of Immortality in another World, which can be pursued in no better a way. All these the grace of God sets home: those People may be suppos'd to cast of Fear who restrain Prayer before God. 'Tis this Duty that the Principles of the Christian Doctrine are to promote.

2. OUR Likeness to God. Godliness is God's Likeness. This may be consider'd both as the Cause and the Effect of the other. Our Conformity to him makes us serve him, for *how shall two walk together except they be agreed?* And our Service makes us more like him; *We look through a Glass, and are chang'd into*

1 Pet. i. 17.
23.

Isa. lii. 6.

xxvi. 79.

Job xv. 2.

Amos iii. 3.

2 Cor. iii.
18.

SERM.
VIII.

1 Pet. i. 15.

1 Joh. iii.

3.

Joh. i. 18.

2 Cor. iv.

Col. i. 15.

Eph. iv. 23.

24.

Pf. cxlvii.

5.

Mat. v. 48.

Cant. viii.

12.

into the same Image from Glory to Glory. 'Tis the Command that he has laid down, Be ye holy, for I am holy. And he that has this Hope in him will purify himself even as he is pure.

The best Influence to this comes from the Principles of the Christian Doctrine. The clearest view that we can have of the divine Perfections is from a *God manifest in the Flesh. No Man has seen the Father at any Time, but the only Begotten who is in the Bosom of the Father, he has revealed him.* In him we have the *Image of the invisible God.*

This is a true and noble Notion of Religion, that it's a Conformity to him that made us. *We are his Workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good Works. We put on the new Man in the Image of him that created us.* Some sort of People are fond of being called *Gods.* They would gladly suppose themselves to have his *Power*; but it would be more their Interest to imitate his Purity and Goodness. Supremacy and Infallibility are not what he has imputed to any. *Great is our Lord and of great Power, his Understanding is infinite.* These we are not to learn of him; but he has propos'd his other Attributes to our Esteem and Practice, to be gracious, holy, just, and true. It's only in this Sense, that we are to be *perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.*

3. **GODLINESS** consists in a Communion with God; which is the exchange of *Love*, between him and us. We delight our selves in his great Goodness; and the Satisfaction we receive from his Love as a Bounty is return'd to him as an Offering. On his part, this is promoted by engaging our Graces, pouring afresh into our Comforts, and drawing us out after himself. On our Part, it is pursued in Desires towards him, Admirations of him, for the Glory of his Nature, the Lowness of his Condescension; for what he is, and what he does. It sometimes rises into joyful Assurances that he is ours and we

are

of GODLINESS.

III

are his; and these are still more powerful as the Soul flies up with them into a better World, where we are not only to have a Glory *from* Christ, but a Glory *with* him.

SERM.
VIII.

This Satisfaction may well be called Religion, because it comes no other way. These are Joys that no Stranger intermeddles with. If our Joys are separated from a Life of Holiness, Humility and Peace, they are False and Counterfeit. An angry passionate Favourite is a Contradiction; God indulges no pettish Children in his Family, though he may not cast 'em out of the House, yet he carries it with a Coldness to them. I have known some Christians very courageous in Dangers, and very liberal in Charities, who have scarce enjoy'd a common Peace within, because of a sour and morose Temper. The Apostle saith, *though I bestow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profits me nothing.* God usually deals with his own Children as they do with others. *With the merciful thou wilt show thy self merciful, and with the froward thou wilt show thy self froward.* Nothing more grieves the Spirit of God than the rising of an inward Passion. If you would be seal'd to the Day of Redemption you must put away Clamour, and Malice, and Anger, and Evil-speaking. This is Religion; and it is a delightful Part of it, to seek the Lord and his Strength, to seek his Face evermore, that your Heart may live for ever. It is good, saith David, *for me to draw nigh unto God. My Soul shall be satisfy'd as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall praise him with joyful Lips.*

1 Cor. xiii.

Pl. xcviil.

25.

Eph. iv. 30.

31.

Pl. cv. 4.

lxxiii. 28.

lxxiii. 5.

4. THIS same Godliness takes into it our Expectation from God. *We are sav'd by hope, but Hope that is seen is not Hope, for what a Man sees, why does he yet hope for? But then do we hope, if we with Patience wait for it.* Most of our dealings with God are about things to come. We desire he would give us
our

Rom. viii.

24; 25.

SERM.
VIII.

Tit. ii. 13.

2 Thes. iii.
5.2 Cor. v.
1, 2.

7, 8.

our daily Bread, and forgive us our Debts, and not suffer us to be led into Temptation; but in all this we are looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. When our Hearts are directed into the Love of God, it is also into a patient waiting for the coming of Christ. We have not yet receiv'd our Portion: He that has put us among the Children will give us a delightful Heritage. We that are in this Tabernacle do groan being burden'd: And it will be thus with us till we are cloath'd upon with our House that is from Heaven. We walk by Faith and not by Sight; and therefore whilst we are at home in the Body we must be absent from the Lord. We are waiting to see the King in his Beauty, and be brought into the Land that is now afar off.

There is, and perhaps there always will be some Dread of Death. The breaking down of this Tabernacle is an Act of Violence. Sickness has a awful way of pulling out the Pins, and taking the Frame to Pieces. We ought to use all means for lengthening of Life: 'Tis not only the Voice of Nature, but of Religion. For which Reason I cannot but think, that a late Author in his Ecclesiastical History has misrepresented the primitive Christians about their Zeal in pushing on Martyrdom; that was no Business of theirs. We have but two Examples in the Bible of good Men desiring to dye rather than live, and each of them are blam'd for it.

Nevertheless, as the living know that they shall dye, so there can be no Religion that does not keep up a Trade with another World. Our Conversation is in Heaven. We are waiting for the Grace that shall be brought to us at the Revelation of Jesus Christ. We look for his second Appearance. Our Eyes are taken off from things that are seen, which are but temporal, and fix'd upon those that are not seen which are eternal.

5. GODLINESS takes into it our Regard to the Divine Institutions. We must *call the Sabbath a Delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable*. People may abound with Arguments against the Obligation of the Command, and strive to bend their Judgment to their Practice; but the Grace of God teaches us to look upon it as an *accepted Time, and a day of Salvation*. There's no Worship of God, but in the way that he has appointed. We are to *continue* not only in the *Apostles Doctrine*, but in their *Fellowship, in breaking of Bread and in Prayers*. Therefore that Person gives himself a Liberty of using *vain Words*, who talks of Christianity, and yet can *turn away his Ear from hearing the Law, finding his Pleasure on God's Holy Day*. They that are above Ordinances are above Grace. The Generation of Seekers enquire where God may be found. He has been known by the breaking of Bread, and *manifested the good Savour of his Knowledge by preaching*. And upon this Practice the Mysteries of Religion have a powerful Influence.

Acts ii. 46.

6. GODLINESS takes into it our Love to godly People. There must be a social Religion; *not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, but considering one another to provoke unto Love and good Works, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching*. The Temper that teaches surpercilious Language, *stand by thy self, for I am holier than thou*, is so far from being right, that it gives God the quickest offence; *These are a Smoak in his Nose, and a Fire that burns all the Day*. The Grace of God gives us a Similitude both to him that made us, and to those who have obtained the like precious Faith with us. All the Whims of Popery that separate People from the Conversation of the World, and throw them into a morose retirement, are as unchristian as they are inhuman. And therefore we ought to abhor them as ways of making us useless; or at the best, like Israel, *an empty Vine that brought forth Fruit to it self*.

Heb. x. 25.

Isa. lxxv. 5.
6.

Hos. x. 1.

SER. M.
VIII.

Rom. v. 6.

8.
Psal. lxxviii
18.

Jam. i. 27.

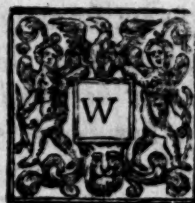
Phil. ii. 15.
1 6.

7. OUR Usefulness to those who are *yet without* is no small part of Religion. To this we have the Example of our gracious God, who causes his Sun to shine upon the just and the unjust. As he was mindful of us in our low Estate, so should we be of others, *When we were without Strength, and yet Sinners, Christ died for the Ungodly. He receiv'd Gifts, even for the rebellions, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* As you have been as bad as they, how do you know but they may in Time be as good as you? and if it is not so, there must be the utmost care to preserve the ways of God in full Reputation, that they may have *no evil thing to say of you.* This is Godliness, *pure Religion and undefiled before God and our Father, to visit the Fatherless and the Widow, and to keep your selves unspotted from the World.* A good Man is an useful one. The Sons of God are *blameless and harmless, without Rebuke, in the midst of a corrupt and perverse Generation, among whom they are as Lights in the World; holding forth the Word of Life.*

August 3.
17 18.

SERMON IX.

II.



WE shall now enquire how this Godliness, as it comprehends our Duty to God and our Beneficence to Man, is promoted by the Mysteries of Religion. How do these Things fill us with Reverence and a godly Fear; and teach us to *do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?* I might consider the two Branches of Holiness apart, and let you see that they are both of them much improv'd by the Doctrines of the Gospel. That *the Grace of God which brings Salvation teaches us to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live soberly as to our selves, righteously as*

Tit. ii. 12.
13, 14.

to our Neighbour, and *godly* in the Acts of Devotion; and that, these Beauties of practice are all maintain'd and heighten'd by our *looking for that blessed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a People that are zealous of good works.*

BUT I shall not consider these things asunder. I will only give you a few particulars, in which you will see, there could be no approach to God, and no true service to Men, if our Religion was not so mysterious as infinite Wisdom has appointed it: That is, if GOD was not *manifest* in the Flesh, *justified* in the Spirit, *believ'd* on in the World, and *receiv'd* up into Glory. It is only by this that we know of a way open'd to the Throne of Grace. 'Tis thus that we are fill'd with a Reverence for the Divine Majesty; by these means he creates the principle of our Love which is no other than a return of Gratitude to *his*: We find by experience that this makes the worship of God our Delight and Pleasure; In this we have the greatest Examples of our Duty, are most inspir'd with Hope, fill'd with Charity to those with whom we differ, and a true Value for them with whom we agree. Thus it appears that Christianity is a Mystery of Godliness; that it forms and adorns the Practice of those that believe it. There are none of it's Doctrines which do not infuse into these Rules that Life that makes them more powerful and pleasant.

I. WERE it not for these Mysteries we could not have had an open way to the Throne of Grace. *Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen, and yet without this Faith, which supposes a Revelation, it is impossible to please God.* It seems to be the universal Language of our Nature, that *all Flesh have sinn'd and fall'n short of the Glory of God.* We cannot but fear that he is a God of Truth and without Iniquity. These are the eternal Glories of his Nature, without which he could not be the Object of our Reverence, and

Heb. xi. 1.
— 6.

Rom. iii.
23.

SERM. Sinners cannot think of them without a Dread. *In thy sight shall no Man living be justify'd.* That ever was, and ever will be, the painful Query of an awaken'd Conscience, *wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self to the most high God?* For this some People will stick at no Expence or Cruelty. *Shall I come with thousands of Rams, and ten thousand Rivers of Oyl? Shall I give my first born for my Transgression, the Fruit of my Body for the Sin of my Soul?* In these sorrowful Confusions must they have wander'd to the end of the World, if God had not reveal'd his Love, and shew'd them better ways of approach than ever they could have thought of; *According to the eternal Purpose which he purpos'd in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have Boldness and Access with Confidence by the Faith of him.*

WE could not come to God as *Adam* did, who had two things to recommend him, the Purity of his Nature, and the Perfection of his Obedience. *We are all an unclean thing, and our Righteousness as filthy Rags.* Our Persons are vile, and our Actions provoking. *Who can bring a clean Thing out of an unclean? not one.* The Angels who were our Companions in Paradise became the terrible Guards of the Place, and Enemies to the old Inhabitants. There was no getting by that *flaming Sword that turn'd every way to keep the way of the Tree of Life.* And therefore, as all the former Passages were block'd up, God is said to *consecrate a new and a living way through the Vail, that is the Flesh of Christ.* To this he has given a Consecration; he has made it *holy.* Our Inventions at the best were Uncertainties, whether they would do or no we could not tell; but upon this Way he has put a royal Stamp. 'Tis what his own Holiness has open'd. Then it is a *new way*, as distinguish'd from that which our Iniquity had clos'd up; and lastly, it is a *living way*, as it gives Life to those that come into it, and as it endures for ever.

Now all this is brought about by the first Branch of the Mystery of Godliness, *God was manifest in the Flesh.*

Flesh. Without that we must for ever have continu'd in the State of our first Parents, driven out from God; from the Habitation of his Holiness, from a Concern with his Love, and any further Expectations of his Bounty. Nay, our Case would have been the same with that of Devils. They are better at contriving ways of return to God, than we can pretend to, and yet it is past all their Cunning to find out any Door of Hope. But *having left their Habitations* once, they have left them for ever, and are *reserv'd in everlasting Chains under Darknes to the Judgment of the great Day.* 2 Pet. ii. 4.

THE Reason why it is not so with us as it is with them, must be all resolv'd into those Things that we call the Mystery of Religion; that *God has sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful Flesh*; that he is *the Way, the Truth and the Life.* No Man comes to the Father but by him. Being justify'd by Faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access by Faith into this Grace wherein we stand. He has join'd the two main Principles of natural and reveal'd Religion together, that *there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus.* Without this there must have been an eternal Bar in our way; for *God hears not Sinners*; He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, or look on them that do evil. And what does this conclude for us, but that we have no Hope and must live as without a God in the World? Had it not been for our High-Priest, who is gone by his own Blood into the holy Place, we could not have come with Boldness to the Mercy-Seat, in hopes of obtaining Mercy and finding Grace to help in every time of need. Rom. viii. 3. Joh. xiv. 6. Rom. v. 1. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Joh. ix. 31. Heb. i. 13. Heb. iv. 16.

2. ANOTHER Principle of Godliness which the Mysteries of Religion do improve is a Reverence of the Divine Majesty. I need not stay to argue the necessity of approaching in this manner to infinite Perfection. *Great fear is due to the Lord in the Assembly of his Saints, and he is to be had in reverence of* Ps lxxxix. 7.

SERM.
IX.

all that are about him. But my particular aim under this Head, is to show you, that the Revelation he makes of himself in the Gospel gives the most useful Impressions upon every Man's Conscience. If thou shouldst mark Iniquity, who could stand? But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. Who is a strong Lord like unto thee, and to thy Faithfulness round about thee! We have obtain'd a Kingdom that cannot be moved, and therefore have Grace to serve God acceptably with Reverence and a Godly Fear. The Promises that we have receiv'd engage us to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God.

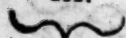
HE never makes such an awful appearance as in the Scheme of Redemption. They that sing the Song of Moses, and of the Lamb, say, *Great and marvelous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are all thy Ways, thou King of Saints; who shall not fear thee and glorify thy Name!* His riding upon the Clouds, and having his way in the Whirlwind and in the Storm, is not so much as his dwelling between the Cherubims. He is terrible out of his holy Places, from whence he gives Strength and Power to his People. When he rules the raging of the Sea, and stills the Waves thereof; when he broke Rahab in pieces as one that is slain, and scatter'd his Enemies with a strong Arm, they were mighty Things; but the Justice and Judgment by which our Redemption is brought about, are the Habitation of his Throne, the Attributes that dwell in his Glory; Mercy and Truth shall go before his Face. When it is said of our Lord that *Men shall be blessed in him, and all Nations shall call him blessed,* the pious Remark upon it is, *blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel who only does wondrous Things.* We find in Fact that no People are so touch'd with a Sense of his Majesty as they who have been enquiring after a Share in his Love.

THE Dread that Mankind are struck into by the noise of Storms and Thunder deserves not the Name of Devotion. *They that dwell in the innermost parts*

are

are afraid of his Tokens, but this does not lead them to worship. No Person does rightly believe that God is, but one that believes he is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. We cannot suppose that *Isaiah* was unacquainted with those Arguments that are fetch'd out of Nature in Proof of the Divine Perfections, and the Duty we owe to them; and yet he is mov'd by a Vision of another sort. He saw the Lord upon a Throne high and lifted up. If an Evangelist may be the Interpreter of a Prophet, the Lord that he saw was the Lord Redeemer, for those Things said *Esaïas* when he saw his Glory and spake of him. His Train filled the Temple, which shows that he came to restore the worship of God, to establish a Correspondence between Heaven and Earth. In this Design he was seen of Angels; He is ador'd by them in the higher Apartments of his House. Above it i. e. above this Throne stood the Seraphims, each one had six Wings, with Twain he cover'd his Face, with Twain he cover'd his Feet, and with Twain he did fly. One cry'd to another; or, as the Hebrew Word is, this cryed to this, they handed the Adoration round, put it into an eternal Circle, saying, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory. Nay, the very unfeeling parts of Nature receive the Impression of this Greatness, the posts of the Door mov'd at the Voice of him that cried, and the House was fill'd with Smoke. Heb. xi. 6.
Isa. vi. 1.
Joh. xii. 43.
— ver. 2.

This was a happy Vision to the Prophet, because thence he concluded that the Purpose of Redemption held good: That, here was a sufficient Attendance of Angels and the Display of a God to make it effectual. But instead of talking over those Joys that he is suppos'd to feel, he looks upon it as the most awful Appearance of Divinity. He is presently fill'd with a sense of his Vanity and Wickedness; of every distance between him and a God so great and so holy. Then said I, wo is me, for I am undone. What! does he think himself undone by the

SERM.
IX.

Visions of Grace and Mercy? No! I don't take that to be the cry of Despair; but this was such a Representation of God in his Power and his Purity as he had never met with before. *I am of unclean Lips, and I dwell in the midst of a People of unclean Lips, for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Had he never seen him before; in his Works of Nature and Providence? Was this the first time that he thought him to be the Lord of Hosts, Lord of the Armies in Heaven, and the Inhabitants on the Earth? No; but the Divine Majesty was never so open'd to him as in the disclosure of a Redeemer.

WE need look no farther than our daily Observation for a Proof of this. The Fear of God, and a Faith in Jesus go together. *We walk before him in Holiness and Righteousness, under the Knowledge of Salvation that he has given to his People in the remission of their Sins, through the tender Mercy of our God.* How is the Deity treated by those that despise Revelation? How grossly deficient are they in their Homage to him! who are more ready to blaspheme his Name, to neglect his Ordinances and lay aside even that Practice which all Nature has confessed to be his due? On the other hand, how does a Knowledge of the Truth as it is in Jesus affect those that have it? In what manner do they think and speak of God? Is it with the Freedom and Sarcasm that are charg'd upon their Principles? Are they too familiar with him? No, 'tis plain they dare not do what they are accus'd of, but *tremble at his Word.* And thus you see, that the Reverence, without which, there can be no agreeable Worship, is promoted by the Mysteries of our Religion.

3. 'TIS in the Belief of these Doctrines that we feel the Principles of our Love to God, which are but the rebound of his to us. *We love him because he first loved us.* This we see in the Mystery of Redemption. Had he pardon'd us without any Satisfaction, it would not only have wrong'd his Justice, but

but obscur'd his Mercy. Had there been a Remission of Sins without shedding of Blood, we must have admir'd his Goodness at a lower rate than we do now.

SERM.
IX.

For *herein has God commended his Love towards us in that whilst we were yet Sinners, Christ died for us.*

Rom. v. 8.

In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent forth his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him. Herein is Love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the Propitiation for our Sins.

1 Joh. iv.
9, 10.

The very price of our Redemption as well as the Thing it self, is an Argument of the Divine Goodness. That he should furnish out all the Expence of his own Satisfaction: That he himself should find out a Ransom is

Job xxxiii.
24.

a great deal more kind than if he had broke in upon his Justice, and given us our Happiness without any regard to *that* at all. We value the Love that bestows

a Salvation, not merely by what the Thing is, but by what it cost, *the precious Blood of the Son of God as a Lamb without Blemish and without Spot.*

1 Pet. i. 19.

Now, the more we see God's Love the more do we feel our own: And this must ever be the noblest Principle of all Duty. What we do with Love looks

like a heavenly Action: When we are *constrain'd* with this, it makes Obedience easy and delightful:

2 Cor. v.
15.

It rushes through every Impediment of Nature and Temptation; it sets us above the World whilst we are in it; and for this we could have no such Argument as we are now possess'd of, were it not for the Revelation that is given us in the Gospel. Here we

are led to design, to venture, to pursue all for God, who has left so much for us. *I count all Things but loss for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffer'd the loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung that I may win Christ: knowing him, the Power of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his Suffering.* From his dying for us, we are

Phil. iii. 8,
9, 10.

willing to be crucify'd to the World; to all the Offers that it makes, and all the Diversions that it gives.

This

SERM. IX. This has been a Principle of Duty to the Martyrs;
 In the Force of that they *accepted not of Deliverance,*
 Heb. xi. 35. *that they might obtain a better Resurrection.* It was in
 view of what Christ had done and suffer'd that they
 Rev. xii. lov'd him so powerfully, *not loving their own Lives un-*
 11. *to the Death.*

4. WE find by Experience that this makes the Wor-
 ship of God our Delight and Pleasure. *Our Hearts*
 Col. ii. 2. *are knit together and comforted unto the Riches of the full*
Assurance of Understanding, to the acknowledgment of the
Mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ. The
 2 Cor. iii. Vail upon the Jews will be *done away in Christ;* and,
 14. *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.* It is
 owing to this, that in all Devotion, *We behold with*
open Face, the Glory of the Lord; the greatest Manife-
 station that he is making of himself to a lost World.
 Acts iv. 13. Hence it is that others have taken notice that *we have*
 Pl. cv. 3. *been with Jesus.* We glory in his holy Name, for the
Heart of them will rejoyce that seek the Lord.

MERE bowing before him that made us, and begging
 his Favour is the duller part of a Believer's Work; a
 Heb. x. 19. *Boldness to enter into the Holiest of all, through the*
Blood of Jesus, is his Principle and his Glory. He's intro-
 Pf. xlv. 3. duc'd by one who is *fairer than the Sons of Men.* To
 Phil. i. 21. *him to live is Christ.* His Saviour is not only the way
 Cant. v. 10. to the Father, but *altogether lovely, the choicest among ten*
 —i. 4. *thousand.* He draws us that we may *run after him;* The
 —vii. 5. *King brings us into his Chambers,* where we are glad in
 him; *He is held in his Galleries, He dwells in the Gar-*
dens, and the Companions hear his Voice. We have tasted
 1 Pet. ii. 3, this Lord to be *gracious, and come to him as a living*
 4. *Stone,* to have more of that Experience; He was *dis-*
allow'd indeed of Men, but he is chosen of God and pre-
cious. We should lose our relish of an Ordinance, if the
 Love and Kindness of God our Saviour had not ap-
 Pf. xlviii. pear'd. *We have thought of thy loving Kindness, O God,*
 9, 10. *in the midst of thy Temple; according to thy Name, O God,*
so is thy Praise to the ends of the Earth. We see by a
 daily Observation, how the Truth as it is in Jesus has
 a mighty

a mighty Influence. It makes us joyful in the House of Prayer. *His Name is as Ointment poured forth. His Love we remember more than Wine.* Had he not been manifested in the Flesh, and dwelt among us, we might have worship'd God, but could never have had any of that Pleasure, that make *his Yoke to be easy, and his Burden light.*

SERM.
IX.

Cant. i. 3.

4.

Mat. xi. 30.

5. IN this Revelation we have the greatest and best Examples of our Duty. By the Manifestation of God in the Flesh, we have the highest of all; the Obedience of Christ *magnified the Law and made it honourable.* And besides that, it is easy to show that without these Doctrines we could not have had those noble Patterns that God has given us in several Ages. It was with a regard to these that they of old have done their Duty, serv'd their Generation, and fall'n asleep in Peace. *Of this Salvation the Prophets enquir'd and search'd diligently, who prophesied of the Grace that should come unto us: searching what, or what manner of Time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before hand the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow: Unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves, but to us they did minister the Things that are now reported by them that have preached the Gospel among us.* It is by this Faith that *the Elders obtain'd a good report.* We are thus compass'd about wit. a great Cloud of Witnesses, who are well spoke of, God has testified of their Gifts, they have obtained Witness that they were righteous. In the Belief of these Things, *the Sufferings of Christ and the Glory that should follow, they have wrought Righteousness, subdued Kingdoms, quenched the violence of Fire, escap'd the edge of the Sword, stopp'd the Mouths of Lyons, out of Weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in Fight, and turn'd to Flight the Armies of the Aliens.*

1 Pet. i. 10,
11, 12.

Heb. xi. 2,
—xii. 1.

THIS has in latter Ages given People a Courage in the Field that no Terror could daunt, and a Faithfulness in Council that no Bribes could pervert. But what is there of those social Virtues in those who deny-

SERM.

IX.

Rom. i. 28.

29, 30,

31.

Phil. ii. 21.

Rom. xvi.

18.

Jer. v. 5.

Heb. xi. 25,

26, 27.

Heb. xi. 16.

Rom. v. 2.

Ps. xxxviii.

37.

2 Tim. i.

12.

ed the Lord that bought them? As they like not to retain God in their Knowledge; he gives them over to a reprobate Mind, being fill'd with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whisperers, Back-biters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, Boasters, Inventers of evil Things, Disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant-Breakers, without natural Affection, Implacable, Unmerciful. The Apostle complains that all Men love their own, not the Things of Jesus Christ, and by his way of judging you may conclude, that those People who hate and despise the Things of Jesus Christ do only love their own. They are for themselves entirely. As they serve not the Lord Jesus, they serve their own Belly. The great Men who knew not the way of the Lord, and the Judgment of their God, have altogether broken the Yoke, and burst the Bonds. 'Tis only among Believers that we find those who have liv'd with Credit, and died with Peace. As they did not make Shipwreck of Faith, they did not make Shipwreck of a good Conscience. They have born down the Temptations of Honours, Places, and Rewards; choosing rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin for a Season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater Riches than all the Treasures of Egypt: Because they had respect to the Recompence of reward, and endur'd as seeing him who is invisible.

6. BY this they were inspir'd with Hope. They went out of the World with no Reluctance at their being so indifferent to it. They desir'd a better Country that is an heavenly. They rejoyc'd in Hope of the Glory of God. He distinguish'd them at their Death. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the upright, for the end of that Man is Peace. They did not die stupid or frighted, as they must have done, if they had paid no regard to the Mysteries of Religion. That which rais'd them above the Fears of Death was their knowing in whom they believ'd, that he transacted that whole affair of Redemption, and was therefore able to keep

what

what they had committed to him against that Day. They look'd forward to the Day which is so often call'd the *Day of Christ*. They had put something into his Hands, and had those apprehensions of his perfection as to think he was able to keep it: That nothing entrusted with him shall be lost.

AND is it not good following such as those through the cross Turns of Life, and at last through the Valley of the Shadow of Death? Is it not very desirable to dye as they did, who fear'd no ill, having God to be with them, *his Rod and his Staff to comfort 'em?* Psal. xxiii. 4. They had no Reluctance in saying, *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* They look'd unto him as the *Author and Finisher of Faith.* They knew that upon the belief that *Jesus died and rose again, that those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him,* and that made them look upon Death as a Passage by which they went to be ever with the Lord. Acts viii. 59. Heb. xi. 2. 2 Thes. iv. 14.

7. THIS has given good People a Principle of Charity to those that differ from them, and the truest Value for those with whom they are agreed. *Speaking the Truth in Love they grow up unto him in all Things who is the Head even Christ, from whom the whole Body fully join'd together increases to the edifying of it self in Love.* As a Mystery is above the Comprehension of humane Reason we can only receive it upon a divine Testimony. *Flesh and Blood has not reveal'd it, but our Father who is in Heaven.* This should give us a Pity for others, who as yet are in Darkness and see no Light. It will keep us from the *Paths of the Destroyer*, and every thing that looks like penal Authority. He that thinks to drive in the Christian Religion by humane Laws, knows nothing what belongs to it. Eph. iv. 15, 16.

IF I should force a *Mahometan*, it would be scandalous to Christianity, because if ever he's convinc'd it is owing to a Light that we cannot give him. We must in *Meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, if peradventure God will give them Repentance to the Acknowledging* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

SERM.
IX.

1 Cor. xii.
3.

1 Joh. iii.
18, 19.

knowledging of the Truth. If no Man can say; that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Ghost, throwing a Man into Jayls and turning, him out of Places for not saying so is a Reflection upon the Holy Ghost for not doing his Office. As for Men who subscribe Articles that they never think of, and mean no more by Orthodoxy than a Title to Preferment, it will be easy enough to them; though they are destitute of the Truth, they suppose that Gain is Godliness. And, perhaps, these will find no scruple to come into hard Measures against those who differ from them. But he that does Justice to the Mystery of any Doctrine will be of Opinion, that as Men cannot give Faith, so Men should not pretend to reward it. This teaches us to love, not in Word or in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth; and hereby we shall know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him.

If you please in our Day to examine the different Tempers with which revealed Religion is maintain'd and oppos'd, you will find whether of them is the Wisdom that descends from above. There is among some People, a Scorn of all those who give up their Reasons to a Divine Instruction. They are treated as Fools and Blind, who take Things upon Trust, and are denied the Title that every honest Man ought to have of being a *free Thinker*. The Belief of what God has told us, is spoke of with Contempt: as if Faith in him was the Destruction of Reason in our selves; so it was of old. That which is call'd the *Arian* Persecution was one of the greatest the Church of God ever felt: And I must freely declare my Opinion that all the late Arguments for Liberty are inconsistent with the Language of Reproach and Insolence that come out of the same Mouths. If People are not to be persecuted for saying there are *no Mysteries in Religion*, they ought not to be laught at, and treated with Scorn for saying *there are*. For *cruel Mockings* are as really Persecution as any Thing in the World can be.

Gal. iv. 29.

The Apostle calls it so, *He that is born after the Flesh persecutes*

persecutes him that is born after the Spirit. The Case that he refers to is that of *Ishmael*, who was guilty of no more to *Isaac* than mocking him. I'm sorry there is so much reason to fear, that if some had the Power they desire, they who have exclaim'd so loudly against making *Newgate* the Place of Hereticks, would think *Bedlam* a proper House for Believers: The Apostle could not give the Jews a worse Name than that of *Despisers*. But the Mysteries of our Religion are according to *Godliness*. When they are receiv'd in Truth, they make a Person humble in his own Eyes, and that, I'm sure, is the best Ground of Peace, for *only by Pride comes Contention*.

Acts xiii.

41.

I WILL close what you have heard with a short APPLICATION.

I. IF these are Mysteries of *Godliness*, then you see the true spring of the Opposition that is made to 'em, not because they are above reason, but because they are against Corruption, and *hide Pride from Man*. One that walks humbly with his God cannot treat 'em with Scorn. But because the practical part of the Bible bears hard upon Flesh and Blood, that it may no longer be a *Rule*. Sinners will not suffer it to be a *Revelation*. *Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil; for every one that doth evil hates the Light, neither comes to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd*. This is bringing Religion lower than the Heathen did. They that *had not the Law*, i. e. a written one, *were a Law to themselves, they had the Work of the Law written in their Hearts*. These own'd a God; they profess'd that he ought to be worship'd; they had their Times of doing it, and such as they always accounted Sacred. Swearing and living without Devotion were Things condemn'd even by their Light; divers Lusts and Pleasures, some sort of Impurities, were *not so much as named among the Gentiles*. Now, what is the Reason that the Bible is so much in contempt, but because it has refin'd our Practice, in giving us a *Commandment that is holy, just, and good*? And that it may not have

Joh. iii. 19.

20.

Rom. ii.

15.

1 Cor. v. 1.

Rom. vii.

12.

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SERM.
IX.2 Thes. ii.
12.

Tit. ii. 10.

Rom. xiv.
17, 18.Joh. vii.
17.

its Weight they deny its Mysteries. *They believe not the Truth who have Pleasure in Unrighteousness.*

2. LET us improve the Doctrines of Religion to this Purpose, to make us better as well as wiser. Ask your selves upon the hearing of these Mysteries, what will God have me to do? This is call'd *adorning the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all Things.* By that means you will live down the Reproach of Men, and they who believe not the word may without it be won by your Conversation. Let it be seen, that these are Mysteries of Godliness; that your Religion does consist in *Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost: He that in these Things serves Christ, is accepted of God, and approv'd of Men.* And, besides, by this means you will come to have a better Light. *He that does his Will shall know the Doctrine whether it be of God.* I should ever have a great Value for that Notion that leads a Person to Prayer, and keeps him always humble. What these Doctrines are, I'm in the next Place to show you, as you find them distributed into Six Particulars. GOD was manifest in the Flesh, justify'd in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the World, and receiv'd up into Glory.



S E R-



SERMON X.

Aug. 17.
1718.

1 TIM. III. 16.

God was manifest in the Flesh.



OUR Apostle having said of the christian religion, that it is *the pillar and ground of truth*; that it is a *mystery* containing the deep things of God; and that it is a *mystery of Godliness*, to form the practice, and fill the mind; in the latter part of the verse he shews us, that this revelation is equal to the pompous account he has given us of it: *'Tis the glorious Gospel of the blessed God.* Ch. i. 11] The particulars of this doctrine do every one of 'em answer the general characters that he had given of 'em all. We may take the account that he lays down under this division.

First, The Person he speaks of is called **G O D**. This is the subject of the revelation. The christian religion is a report of Him, who was *de-* Rom. i. 4 *clar'd to be the Son of God with power.*

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Secondly,

Secondly, We have the several discoveries that he made of himself, which are no fewer than six; he was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the world, and receiv'd up into glory. Of these particulars you may observe two things.

1st, That they give us the several gradations of his power and love. One comes after another. They are so many stages of his appearance, comprehended in a history, that begins with his Incarnation, and ends with his Ascending up on high. This
 1 Cor. xv. is what he delivered to the Corinthians ἐν ᾧ περὶ τοῦ
 3. 4. among the first and chief things, *that Christ died for our sins, and that he was buried and rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures.*

2^{dly}, That they all relate to the happiness of mankind, and the redemption that he came about; 'twas for his people that he put on flesh, and put on glory. That he appear'd on earth, that he return'd to heaven, and went thro' all the intermediate parts of the history that is mention'd in my text. *For their sakes he sanctified himself, that they might be sanctified thro' the truth.* These are
 Joh. xvii. things that relate to us, the matter of our faith;
 19. the mystery that God has given for our entertainment and practice. That the holiness of his people may be carried on, he reveals what Christ has done from the extreme of humiliation to that of reward. This doctrine leads his people into a life of dependance and duty.

But before I enter upon this account of the words, we may consider the objection that is rais'd against the doctrine contain'd in 'em. Instead of Θεός, which signifies God, there are two copies that have it Ὁ, which signifies *That* or *Which*; and so they refer it to the mystery he had spoke of before that *This* was manifest in the flesh, &c. But, besides the testimony of all other manuscripts

manuscripts against these two, we need do no more S E R M
than take the affirmation quite thro' the several X.
particulars, and examine how properly these six
things may be said of the Gospel.

'Tis with a great weight upon the phrase to say,
that the Gospel is *justified in the Spirit*. The Spi-
rit's revealing, explaining, and impressing it we
understand, and if that's all they mean by the ju-
stification of the Gospel, 'tis a very odd way of
conveying the notion. Then again, it is said to
be *seen of Angels*, as they are ministers of pro-
vidence, and help on the design of grace: It is
made known to 'em; but whether this may be
call'd their *seeing* it, I will leave any one to judge.
It may indeed be referr'd to their contemplation
of it *in heaven*, but how that comes to be a part
of the mystery of godliness *to us*, I cannot ima-
gine. That the Gospel is *preach'd unto the Gentiles*,
and believ'd on in the world, is true enough; but I
cannot apprehend how it is *manifest in the flesh*.
That it is *manifest* we grant, because it's preach'd
and believ'd; but what these words *in the flesh*
have to do with it, is not so easie to be conceiv'd.
And the last part of the character is more diffi-
cult than all the rest, how the Gospel should be
receiv'd up into glory. This is at least an unusual
way of talking: There's more mystery in the
language than there is in the thing; and surely
they who are against a mysterious doctrine, ought
not to confound us with mysterious words. Be-
sides the harshness of the interpretation, I would
observe to you these two things,

1. That the whole paragraph is deliver'd in the
form of a report, or a history. He tells us of that
which is *already done*. This can hardly be said of
the Gospel itself; for we must not speak of its
being *manifest* as a thing that is *over*, *in a way*,
because it still continues to be *the light of the*
world.

SER M. world. And if it may be said in any sense to be
 X. receiv'd up into glory, that's all *future*, and must
 refer to the vindication that God will give it at
 last, when *the judgment is set, and the books are*
open'd; when persons shall have their secret thoughts
 disclos'd, and their final sentence determin'd by
 what is written there. This may indeed be cal-
 led receiving it into glory; but that's all to
 come.

Now, if you apply these things to our Saviour,
 it may be truly said of him, that *HE was mani-*
fest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, &c. There are
 proper periods for each of these. There was a
fulness of time for the first, and particular appoint-
 ments for every one of the rest. He yet indeed
 continues to be *preach'd* unto the Gentiles, and
believ'd on in the world; but there was a *set time*
 to favour these desolate parts of the earth; and of
 that he speaks with joy, when the *Greeks* came to
Philip, desiring to see Jesus. Now, saith he, is
 the hour come that the Son of man shall be glorified.

Joh. xii.
 22, 23.

And then, his being receiv'd up into heaven is
 an historical truth; there was a day which he de-
 voted to that solemnity. As he was *justified of the*
Spirit at his resurrection, being declar'd to be the *Son*
of God with power by the Spirit of holiness, so after

Acts i.
 21.

9. he had spoke to the Disciples, a cloud receiv'd him
 out of their sight. We read of this as the close of
 a dispensation, that begun with *John's* baptism, con-
 tinued thro' the whole course of what *Jesus* did
 and taught, and lasted till the day in which he was
 taken up from 'em. All the expressions in the text
 fall easie to this interpretation. If we will under-
 stand 'em of Christ, there is no need to force the
 phrases out of their natural sense, but take 'em
 in this book, as we should take 'em in any other.

Acts xxvi.

26. The King knows of these things, saith the Apostle,
 before whom I speak freely. This is what we must
 confess

confess with our mouths, that Jesus died, and believe Rom. x. 9.
in our hearts, that God rais'd him from the dead.

2. He speaks of this as the great mystery of godliness; the most important *wonder* that ever God revealed; a thing that strikes all the powers of adoration. 'Tis *not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world*, whom God has brought to nought; but *his own wisdom in a mystery*, that which is *hidden*, that which he had *ordain'd before the worlds to our glory*; which *not one* 1 Cor. xi. *of the princes of this world knew*; but God has *re-* 7. 8, 9. *vealed it to us by his Spirit*. These are *Εὐὸν Θεῶν*, the ^{10.} depths of divinity.

Now, if you understand this account of the Gospel, that cannot be the greatest mystery. I own *it is* a mystery to have such a revelation as this in the world, as the means of raising and feeding a spiritual life; but methinks the resurrection of the body, and the happiness of the soul are greater wonders; that *this mortal should put on immortality*, that people so defil'd should be fitted for heaven, are things that sound more amazing, than to have the Gospel made known among the nations.

The Apostle would not have drawn on our regard after this manner [without controversie great is the mystery of godliness] if there was room to imagine any thing *greater* than what he was going to speak of. 'Tis true, no mystery can be little; but by his manner of introducing *this*, we should suppose there were degrees among 'em, and that now he was about to deliver that which is the *greatest* of all. Now, where lies the extraordinary wonder, that the Gospel should be *manifest in the flesh*, i. e. as they explain it, that it should be preach'd by men of like passions with ourselves? There are many things that we are more amaz'd at than this. Where's the peculiar degree of mystery, that it should be *justified by the Spirit*, that

S E R M. the Spirit who reveals it by his wisdom, should attend it with his influence? And so you may say of the rest.

X.

But now, it is all wonder; 'tis as high as our thoughts can rise; nay, by the confession of those who oppose this doctrine, 'tis more than men can believe; it's *too much* a mystery, that God *shou'd be manifest in the flesh*; that he who seem'd to be neglected and forsaken of the Father, should be *justified of the Spirit*: That he who was made lower than the Angels, was *seen* of 'em, and own'd by 'em: That he who was made of the Seed of *Abraham, a minister of the circumcision*, should be *preach'd unto the Gentiles*, to whom he was never sent in person: That he who found so little faith in the earth, is *believ'd on in the world*; and after he was abandon'd both by God and man, should be *receiv'd up into glory*: These are wonders of another sort. If there's any comparing of mysteries, we must all of us own, that it is a great deal more for God to give us *himself* as a companion, than to give us his *book* for a rule.

The Apostle does not only speak of a mystery, but a *great* one, and one that is so *without controverſie*; none in the world shall be able to deny it the title; and no one ever did; so far from it, that the people who don't believe it, give a testimony to the greatness of the mystery: There's *no controverſie* about that; no, they are so satisfied upon this head, as to make it their argument against the doctrine, because it is over-mysterious. There are many wonders which they receive, tho' they cannot explain; but this exceeds 'em all.

I shall therefore give you the words of the text, as they stand in our translation for the first branch of the mystery of godliness, or rather the root and ground of all the rest; and you may take 'em as a doctrine.

GOD

GOD was manifest in the flesh.

I am directed by the parts of the text, and its connexion to what went before, to proceed in the following method.

1. The Person that he speaks of is *God*.
2. Here's the *manifestation* that he has given of himself.
3. This was *in the flesh*, by taking upon him our nature.
4. This is to be consider'd both as a *mystery*, and as a *mystery of godliness*, the foundation of practical religion.

I. We may put the question, as the prophet did, *Who is he that comes from Edom, with his died garments from Bozrah, who was thus manifest in the flesh? He that speaks in righteousness, mighty to save.* Isa. lxiii. 1. We have the plain language of the text, that it was *the great God*. I must own that the title of *God* does not in every place of Scripture signify the supreme Deity.

First, 'Tis very certain, that there is such a thing as a person's being called God, by virtue of his *office*. And the appellation does not express so much as a moral dignity, or tell us that they who have it are ever the better for it. That sentence in the lxxxii^d Psalm [*I have said ye are Gods*] seems to be said in reproach. For as they judg'd unjustly, and accepted the persons of the wicked, as they would not understand, but walk'd on in darkness, calling them Gods was no security; for they should die like men, and fall like one of the princes. As this name cannot dignifie a tyrant, it ought not to protect him; for it is given to the vilest being in the creation. The Devil himself is call'd *the God of this world*: And he may as well from that title 2 Cor. iv. plead for an universal empire, as any other person argue an absolute command.

SER. M. Secondly, 'Tis also to be confess'd, that the name
 X. of God is sometimes given in the execution of a
 particular warrant: And then it is limited to that
 very *commission* by which those people are em-
 power'd to act. Thus the Lord tells *Moses*, I
 Exod. vii. *have made thee a God to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy*
 1. *brother shall be thy prophet.*

Thirdly, It seems to be given to the Angels for
 Heb. i. 6. the dignity of their nature: *Let all the Angels of*
God worship him, is supposed to be a quotation of
 Psal. xcvi. those words, *Worship him all ye Gods*. Now the
 7. question is, whether the word in my text is capa-
 ble of any higher sense than these three. For,
 notwithstanding what I have said, it is certain,

1. That there is but *one God*; and therefore the
 communication of the title ought to be regarded
 with the greatest modesty. No perfections of the
 Divine Nature go along with it. That's the lan-
 Deut. vi. guage of all true religion, *The Lord our God is one*
 4. *Lord*. He alone is the possessor of *immortality*, μό-
 1 Tim. vi. vos ἔχον. *We know that there is no idol in the world,*
 16. ὁ θεὸς ἑσθλὸν ἐν κόσμῳ, *and that there is no other*
 1 Cor. viii. *God besides one*, ὁ θεὸς θεὸς ἑτεροὶς ἐστὶ μὴ εἷς. For tho'
 4, 5, 6. *there are those who are called Gods, either in heaven*
or in earth, as there are Gods many, and Lords ma-
ny; yet unto us there is one God the Father, of whom
are all things, ἐξ οὗ as the fountain out of which
they are taken, and we unto him εἰς αὐτὸν; and one
Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we
by him. The heathen run into a whimsical devo-
 tion, by fancying a multitude of deities; but the
 wiser sort among 'em acknowledg'd one supreme
 Power, and whenever any of 'em came out of their
 erroneous opinion, it is what they loaded with the
 y Thel. i. utmost abhorrence. *They turn'd from idols to serve*
 9. *the living and true God.* As it was foretold the
 Jer. xvi. *Gentiles should come from the ends of the earth, and*
 19, 20. *say, Surely our fathers have inherited vanity, lies, and*
things

things wherein there is no profit: Will a man make S E R M.
 Gods to himself which are no Gods? Nothing in re- X.
 velation ever broke in upon the unity of the God-
 head. The supposition of two natures, equally
 supreme, almighty, and eternal, can have no
 place in reason, and no pretence from Scripture.
'Tis life eternal to know the only true God.

John xvii.

2. Tho' God has suffer'd creatures to wear his
 titles, yet he has always exprest a jealousie at their
 sharing his honour. Both the angelic and human
 nature have sunk under his hand, when they made
 any pretensions this way. *Lucifer the son of the* Isa. xiv.
morning said, I will be like the most High; I will ex- 12.
alt my throne above the stars of God: And thus be-
ing lifted up with pride, he fell into that which is 1 Tim. iii.
called the condemnation of the Devil; and so it far'd 6.
 with our first parents: They had a mind to be as
 Gods, and upon that he drove out the man. So it has Gen. iii.
 been with particular tyrants. *Nebuchadnezzar, by* 24.
 raising himself to be a God, was thrown down Dan. iv.
 into a beast, to live and feed as they do, in their 22.
 manner, and perhaps in their company. The King
 of Tyrus had his heart lifted up, and said, *I am a*
God, I sit in the seat of God, and he had set his Ezek.
heart as the heart of God. And upon this crime xxviii. 2.
 you have terrible animadversions of providence:
Wilt thou say yet before him that slays thee, I am a ver. 9.
God? but thou shalt be a man, and no God, in the
hand of him that slays thee. Thus the man of sin,
the son of perdition, opposes and exalteth himself a-
bove all that is called God, or that is worship'd; so
that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing
himself that he is God. This wicked one will the Lord 2 Thes. ii.
consume with the Spirit of his mouth, and destroy wi. h 4. 8.
the brightness of his coming.

So that you see, tho' God has been pleas'd to
 allow the title, yet 'tis with such limitations, that
 it must never signifie in any other than himself, a
 supre-

S E R M. supremacy of power, or a claim to worship. The

X.

Angels, tho' they have their name with an eminence that the greatest of men cannot pretend to, yet are not rais'd by it above the temper and the posture of devotion: Tho' they *excel in strength*, they obey his commandments, fulfil his pleasure,

Psal. ciii. and *hearken to the voice of his word*. Nor dare any
18. of them take the homage with the title. One

of them would not let *John fall down before him*, but says in a peremptory manner, *See thou do it*

Rev. xxii. *not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren*
9. *the prophets: Worship thou God.*

From hence you may conclude, that whoever is called by the name of God, and *upon that* makes a demand of religious worship, must be either a Creator or an Usurper. Thus Antichrist *as God*

2 Thes. ii. *sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is*
4. *God*. And would Christ do any thing to give a

John v. suspicion of *making himself equal with God*? Would
18. he, *being a man, make himself God*, if he had not

x. 33. the same eternal nature? When he rose again from the dead, it was said of him, *Worship him all ye*

Heb. i. *Gods*; and to him, *thy throne, O God, is for ever*
6, 8. *and ever*. This proves that he is, greater than those who are called Gods, either from their office, or the dignity of a deriv'd nature,

Tho' worship is oftentimes no more than a civility, yet it's impossible that the word should carry so low a sense in this place. God has order'd his Angels to attend his servants, to bear 'em up in their hands, but can that be call'd by the name of *worship*? Why should we then suppose, when God saith with all this solemnity, [*let the Angels worship him*] he means any less by it than every reader would think that *David* did in the Psalm from which it is taken? where he tells us of a

Psal. xcvi. *Jehovah that reigns; that clouds and darkness are a-*
2, 3, 4, 5. *bout him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation*
of

of his throne: That the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth; that the heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. What! is he speaking all this of a titular God, one that has the name, but not the nature? No surely: On purpose to distinguish the God whom he means from the creatures that are only called so, he turns with indignation upon others, *Confounded be all they that serve graven images*, and then adds, *Worship him all ye Gods*. Would any mortal be at a loss about the explication of these words, as they stand in the old Testament? And are they debas'd and sunk into a lower sense, when they are brought into the new? Don't they contain as much in the Apostle, as they did in the Psalmist?

ver. 7.

Nay, you may carry the consideration much farther. In the *Psalm* they are suppos'd to be spoke by *David*. Tho' he receiv'd 'em under the direction of the holy Spirit, yet he delivers 'em in his own name; 'tis a call of the same kind with that *Psal. ciii. 21. Bless the Lord, ye his Angels*, and *Psal. cxlviii. 1, 2. Praise the Lord in the heavens, praise him in the heights, praise him all his Angels, praise him all his hosts*. Thus he wishes here, *Worship him all ye Gods*. But in the epistle to the Hebrews, the sentence is plac'd with more dignity, as it comes out of the mouth of God himself, *When he brings the first begotten again into the world, He saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him. He saith it who has so often said that he is a jealous God, and will not give his worship to another*. Would not any one conclude that our worship may safely follow that of the Angels? But

I will keep within the argument of the text; the Person who manifested himself in the flesh, is here called *G O D*. I have allow'd that the mere title does not always signify what we mean by Divinity.

S E R M. vinity ; but the question is, whether it is *here* capable of so low a notion. I desire you will still keep in mind what I have already told you, that God never gave the title with a design of conveying religious *worship* to those that have it. And therefore, if we find either the Father has given, or Christ himself has taken, the name of God, on purpose to engage our faith, to possess our reverence, and lead us into the lowest adorations, we must conclude that he is *God*, who was manifest in the flesh.

You're very sensible that this doctrine is avow'd upon several other Scriptures, and therefore to enter with a full design into the controversie, is to consider 'em all, which I shall not do from this text. My business is to lay before you what I take to be contain'd in these words, and shall never bring in any other passages than as they give an illustration to this. To that purpose I would observe,

1. That the question is not whether Christ was *man*, and had an inferior nature to the Father ; that's confess'd by all, and therefore,

2. It's to no manner of purpose to observe how many more texts there are to prove him a *Mediator*, than to prove him a God, because that's properly the main account we are to have of him.

3. His *hiding* the Deity, suffering it not to be known, and publicly own'd, is no argument against it, because it was part of his obedience to become of *no reputation*, and to make way for the *death of the cross*.

4. If there are but a *few* places, nay, if there is but *one*, in the Bible where his Divinity is revealed, 'tis the same thing, as if there were a thousand. The second text does not add to the truth of the first, it can only confirm it,

5. There

5. There are several passages which must either SERM
X
be so understood, or we shall find it necessary to lay aside the usual meaning of words, and bring a new sense to 'em.

6. This has been the belief of good people, and an opinion that the Spirit of God has witness'd to: It has rais'd 'em above their fears, and prov'd their greatest support in a dying hour.

7. If they were wrong in this, they must have been guilty of the worst of crimes, and have gone out of the world in an act of idolatry. And how shall we account for the satisfaction they had in dying? If that was all a delusion, will it not be very hard to prove there is any reality in godliness?

8. If he is not God, we are in no better a condition, nay upon some accounts in much worse, than those under the law; for then God reveal'd himself to 'em with a greater majesty. He govern'd 'em by himself; which was more than speaking to 'em by his Son, upon supposition that he was an inferior.

9. None but a God could have answer'd the end of being manifest in the flesh, as a Prophet to teach effectually, as a Priest to make reconciliation, and as a King of Saints to be head over all things unto the Church.

10. The character of Deity is what the Scripture has laid upon all the other branches of this mystery; his being justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the world, and receiv'd up into glory.

11. It is no part of the question, whether Christ was man, and might not say with all propriety, *My Father is greater than I. That the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do;* Joh. v. 19.
That there is a day and hour which the Son knows not of; Mar. xiii. 32.
and that *the Son himself shall be subject to him*

- S E R M. *him that has put all things under him; that God may be all in all:* This matter is universally confess'd; that he was *the man Christ Jesus*; though he uses a word to express it that cannot signifie so much in him as it does in us, when he calls himself *the Son of man*: when we are called so, the meaning can be no other, than that we are produc'd by two human parentes, which is more than can be said of him, and therefore in his genealogy the historian is very cautious. He tells us, *Jesus was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph*: But that supposition was ill grounded, because this was *the sign that God himself would give his people, the only instance that we have of it in all ages of the world, that a virgin should conceive and bear a son*. The manner of bringing this about, is told by the Angel in language that is never to be chang'd: *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, and therefore the holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God*. So that, the very producing of his human nature was a divine act. And yet
- There is no controversie upon this head, that he was truly the man Christ Jesus. 'Tis allow'd, That forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself took part of the same. It behov'd him in all things to be made like unto his brethren. We have not an high Priest who cannot be touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. So that tho' that body was what God provided for him, yet he was really made of a woman. He had the likeness of sinful flesh; he took upon him those infirmities, and submitted to those vexations in our nature, as if he had been a sinner. Sin was to be condemn'd in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfill'd in those that walk after the Spirit.
- Therefore

Therefore these two principles are the main articles of our religion, that there is *but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus*. He is, what the primitive promise foretold he should be, *the seed of the woman. The Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us. We have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of that word of life.*

S E R M.
X.

Gen. iii.
15.
John i. 14.
1 John i. 1.

2. It answers no manner of purpose to observe how many more texts there are to prove him a man, than there are to tell us he is God. There's a plain reason for this, because our concern with him is in his mediatorial title. *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. member Christ of the seed of David was rais'd from the dead according to my Gospel.* He is the *days-man* between God and us. We read of Christ that *by him* were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, *visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things are created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* But how many of these invisibles he has made, the height of these thrones, the nature of these dominions, the number of these principalities and powers, what worlds he has formed, how he rules 'em (for they are created for him, as well as by him) the Scripture tells us nothing of, because the design of the Gospel is not to give us the glory that he has from his several creatures, but that which comes from the redemption that he has undertaken. It's more our concern to know that he is *head over all things unto the Church*, than that principalities and powers are subject to him; that he redeems us, than that he rules them.

1 John i. 3.
Re- 2 Tim. ii. 8.
Job ix. 33.
Col. i. 16.
17.

So that, I suppose, you will not be much mov'd by an argument that is often us'd, that Christ is seldom call'd God, but there's scarce a page in the new

S E R M. new Testament wherein he is not represented as less than God: no manner of doubt of it; because the design of the book is to consider him as *manifest in the flesh*, as taking away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And therefore if he was call'd a man ten thousand times, it proves but these two things: First, that *he really was so*, which none denies; and, secondly, that our regard to him must be as John xvii. *he is so. This is life eternal, to know Jesus Christ, whom God has sent.* The Apostle speaks of the excellency 3. of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. This is not a knowledge of what he does among the Angels, how he order'd the sea and land, giving the former its decree, and the latter its settlement, his Prov. viii *setting a compass upon the face of the heavens*; We are 27. not so much interested in these things as in his re-joining in the habitable parts of the earth, and having Ver. 31. *his delight among the sons of men.* That I may know him, saith he, *the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death.* Phil. iii. 10.

3. His *hiding* the Deity, and not letting himself be known and confess'd abroad, is no argument that he is not God. Because this was the necessary humiliation of one nature, and prepar'd for the sufferings of another. The Divine Nature could not die, and therefore all the humbling of this was Phil. ii. 7. *to make himself of no reputation*; to lay aside the 8. form of God in which he was, and take upon him the form of a servant. The remark that some give us upon this text, that the *form* of God does not prove that he was God, but only like him, sweeps away the rest of the verse at once: They may as well say *the fashion of a man*, and *the form of a servant* do not signify the reality of the nature he took, or the sufferings that he felt, but only a resemblance of 'em both. The criticism, instead of garbling the text, quite destroys it, and makes his human

human nature a phantom; as well as the divine no more than a resemblance. He charg'd the devils that they should not make him known to *be the holy one of God.* It was needful that he should be *despis'd and rejected of men, a servant of rulers:* this he could not have been, had he suffer'd his brightness to appear. But that is what *none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* When he had been own'd by the Father in the mount of transfiguration, he order'd his disciples to let none know it, *till the Son of man was risen again;* and gave this as the reason for it, that he was to be deliver'd into the hands of sinful men. When the young man came and kneel'd to him, he refus'd the honours that were his due, *why callest thou me good?* And this was one branch of his humiliation.

S E R M
XI.

1 Cor. iii
8.

Mat. xvii.
9.

SERMON XI.

Aug. 31.
1718.

IV.



IF there are but a few places of Scripture where he is called God; nay, if there is but *one* that reveals to us the truth of his divine nature, 'tis the same thing as if there were a thousand. This is what I need not much insist on; because it carries its own evidence. One text may receive light from another, but it has a fulness of truth within itself. 'Tis not here as it ought to be in some affairs among men, that one witness shall not be sufficient; at the Mouth of two or three witnesses must the thing be determined: this is needful when we have to do with creatures that are

L

false

S E R M. false and fallible : that will deceive, and may be deceived ; liable to take a delusion, and ready to give one. But it is otherwise when God is the speaker : *He is not a man that he should lie. A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he.* His words don't want any thing to give 'em an importance, but are as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. So that if he has but said it once, there's as great a foundation as our faith can desire. 'Tis as true that *Shalman spoil'd Bethurbel in the day of battel*, which is never mention'd, but *Hos. x. 14.* as it is that *Jeroboam the son of Nebat made Israel to sin*, which is dropt into the story of almost every King that succeeded him.

I lay down this principle to take off the terror of an objection that has in it a great deal more noise than substance ; that there is no comparison between the number of texts that declare the *human nature* of Christ, and those that give him the title and the attributes of a God. This signifies nothing at all to the argument : It only shews, that we are to believe he was man, *made of a woman*, and that he is chiefly revealed to us in the state of a Mediator, as placing himself between God and sinners, making up the quarrel and filling up the distance. As that is our principal concern with him, so he is frequently reveal'd in a character that suits with the faith we have in him, and the expectation we have from him. *Him has God set forth a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood.*

His absolute Deity is what we have the less concern with. It's not so much to our purpose to know what other worlds he has created ; in what manner all things are upheld by the word of his power ; as that he has by himself purg'd away our sins, and in our nature is made better than the Angels. This is the report of the Gospel, the record that God has given us of his Son. If he has made thrones and dominions,

dominions, and principalities and powers, (as we S E R M.
are told he has) yet it's not the work of the Bi- XI.
ble, to give the records of his government over
these. For as he is before all things, so by him
all things consist: *ἐν αὐτῷ πάντα συνίσταται*; in him
they are held together; he has bound the creation,
given a beauty to the parts, and a harmony to the
whole. But our business is to know what he has
done, and will do, for the redemption of human
nature; so that, it's no wonder that the book of
God is taken up with the story of his life and trans-
actions *in the habitable parts of the earth*, and the
course of *his delights among the sons of man*. *The*
Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; full of
grace and truth: And of his fulness have we receiv'd, John i. 14.
and grace for grace; for the Law was given by Mo- 16, 17.
ses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

These accounts determine nothing of his ante-
cedent state: His dwelling among us, and being
made flesh, is not to be understood in any contra-
diction to his being *with God*, and *his being God*, and Ver. 3, 4:
that the world was made by him, and without him was Ch. vi. 61.
not any thing made that was made. *The Son of man*
ascended up where he was before. The evidence or
importance of a truth does not depend on the num-
ber of texts that are brought for it. If there is
but a single revelation, if only one in a certain place
has said it, 'tis enough, because it comes from a
God, *that cannot lie*; but we may say upon this
head, as the Psalmist has done upon another, *God*
has spoken once, yea twice have I heard it. For

5. There are several Scriptures that cannot be
understood of any other than God manifest in the
flesh, unless we will lay aside the usual meaning of
words, and give 'em a sense in the Bible which
they can bear no where else. *Except you utter by the* 1 Cor. xiv.
tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be 9.
known what is spoken? for you speak into the air. It

S E R M. is scarce to be conceiv'd, that he who has given us
 XI. this book for a rule of faith and practice, would
 suffer so many places in it to carry an uncertain
 sense, and lay us under any temptation of mista-
 king, in a matter that so nearly concerns his own
 glory. I have before told you that I shall not
 enter into the full controversy, because I would
 not bring in all the texts that refer to it under this
 one: and therefore I shall only mention a few that
 declare the person of our Redeemer to be the true
 God.

One is *Isa. ix. 6. To us a child is born, to us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.* Where we read of his incarnation, in the first and lowest part of life; to us a child is born, to us a Son is given: that can be understood of no other than him, who was *made of a woman, and made under the law.* The government shall be upon his shoulders: we should think that this is too much for a creature; but lest it should be taken for no more than a delegation of authority committed to him, we are told at large who he is: This is the name whereby he shall be called, *Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.* *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end; he shall sit upon the throne of David.* Here are things thrown together that plainly relate to different natures. He is said to sit upon the throne of *David*, which signifies a spiritual empire over his people in this world; and yet, that of his government there shall be no end; whereas we know, that the places where he has it shall be destroy'd. So that, the immortality of his kingdom, and the peace that arises from it must be understood of something to which the throne of *David* never reach'd. Again, it is said that he is
 I born

born a *Son*, and yet that his name shall be call'd *S E R M.*
the everlasting *Father*; that he is given to us as a *child*, and yet that he is the mighty *God*. *XI.*

One would think that the *manner* of speaking this should be no part of the objection, that he is not said to *be* so, but only that it's the name whereby he shall be *call'd*. For tho' the title of *God* is given to persons who fill the office, yet this is too much to be said, that such a one is *the mighty God*; and it transcends all imagination, that any creature should be call'd *the everlasting Father*. What a great deal of learning must be forc'd into the service to disrobe these words of the majesty they appear with? We'll suppose, that they signify no more than a God by office; that they are only Names of divinity, and don't express the true Nature: But would the generality of people take 'em so? We may say upon this argument *what is written in the law, how readeest thou?*

Is it not pity that so many thousands of humble, serious persons should be under a necessity of thinking wrong upon the subject, only for want of that critical learning, that reaches such a very little way? Must a man either be a *Critick* or an *Idolater*? Can we think that God, who was so gracious to give us this book, has made it like a broken trumpet, to give an uncertain sound? Is this the way for those that *err in spirit to come to understanding, and those that murmur'd to learn doctrine?* *I sa. xxix. 24.*

Can we say, upon this supposition, that he causes *light to shine out of darkness*, and gives us in our hearts *the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of* *2 Cor. iv. 6.*
Jesus Christ? That he should tell us of a *child*, and call him the everlasting *Father*, which is the highest name that he takes to himself! That he should charge us to call a person, like ourselves, by the title of the *mighty God*, which is the greatest word that we can use, and belongs to none but an infi-

S E R M. *more nature!* I say, why should he thus ensnare our souls with metaphors! There's not one reader in a thousand but would think that the person here spoke of was *God*.

Suppose the former part of the verse was left out, or the whole vary'd thus, *This is my name* whereby I will be call'd; the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace; would not all mankind believe the words were incapable of any lower sense than what agrees to the supreme Being? And do they signify any less by the addition of that clause; *To us a Child, a Son is given?* 'Tis hard indeed upon those who do not read the text with a drain, a criticism that sucks out the main force of it.

What men of deep thought and vast abilities may do I know not; they have got the art of making divine titles signify only a *creature*, and divine worship only a *civility*: but other people will be at a loss, who would gladly always speak of God, as they speak of no one besides; who use words both *of him*, and *to him*, which they dare not give to any other Being. It will be difficult for such as those to know how to talk, because their best phrases are gone: they will want language for devotion, if he must be called the mighty God, who is *not* the mighty God, and he the everlasting Father, who is *not* the everlasting Father. There's no getting higher than these terms: And can we imagine that God would use *great swelling words of vanity*, or say that of a child which is downright false of every one but himself? if it was not true that our Saviour saith, *I and my Father are one.*

Joh. x. 30.

Another text that I think cannot be diverted from this interpretation is, *Mic. v. 2. Thou Bethlehem Ephrath, tho' thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that*

that is to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting. Here we are under every necessity to suppose, that he speaks of a *Messiah*, from the place of his birth. Thou *Bethlehem Ephratah*, tho' thou be little among the thousands of *Judah*, yet out of thee shall HE come. This was a circumstance that both Jews and Christians were agreed in, that Christ should come out of *Bethlehem*, the town where *David* dwelt; and that expression, he shall come forth *unto me*, shews his errand that he was to be the Mediator between God and man: He should glorify the Father on earth: Joh. iv. 34. His meat and drink was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. Who is it then, that should have his nativity at *Bethlehem*, and such a concern with the great God? One whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.

We'll suppose for a while that those goings forth of old were no more than the manifestations that he made of himself to the Patriarchs and Prophets: It was the *Angel* who went before 'em in their marches from *Egypt*, and frequently appear'd to 'em in the promis'd land. This sense of the text does shew that he went forth of old; but what shall we do with the other word, *from everlasting*? To say that this sometimes signifies no more than a long while to come, when it is mention'd in prophecy, cannot be denied; but that therefore it signifies only a long while past, when it is deliver'd in history, is by no means to be allow'd. Several things that shall perish, are said to be for ever, because they will hold for many ages; but I do not know that any thing is from eternity, or has that title given to it, besides the nature and counsels of God. In his times he will shew who is the blessed and only Potentate, who only has immortality. 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.

To everlasting, may be applied to Saints and Angels, and the happiness of both; but 'tis only said

S E R M. of One, FROM *everlasting to everlasting thou art God,*

XI.

Pfal. xc. 2.

We may limit the passages that give the character of eternity for the time to come, but it was never once bestow'd upon any thing as to what is *past*; and therefore, if his goings forth of old, which have been *from everlasting*, mean no more than that he has done thus for several ages, it is using the word as it never was us'd before, and so as no human thought can reconcile to sense. It is false, it is monstrous, and a gross absurdity to say, that any created person was from everlasting, or that he was *before all things*. Had it been only that he was *from the beginning*, or *ever the earth was*, or that he had a *glory with the Father before the world was*, some diminutive sense might be forc'd in upon the words, that they only tell us he had a being antecedent to this creation; and could not an Angel have said so too? If the phrases mean no more than an existence before our world, they make him *no better than the Angels*. *Those stars of the morning*
 Job
 xxxviii. 7 *sung together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy,* when this earth of ours was made: So that, if that's all that Christ means, *Prov. viii.* he speaks beneath himself.

The Angels had a *glory with the Father before the world was*; but the words under our present thoughts are not patient of such an interpretation as is fix'd with so much violence upon others; for here it is said, that he is *from everlasting*. Angels have had their *goings forth of old*: they flew about this world of ours after it was put into shapes; but can it be said of 'em without horrid blasphemy, that they are *from everlasting*? And therefore that which is here affirm'd of the Prince that should rise out of *Bethlehem, the man that is to be our peace*, is too much for a creature: 'tis a contradiction to all receiv'd being, eternally inconsistent with any beginning. It can never be
 said

said of Him, that there was a time when he was S E R M.
not: We may apply to him in these words, *From* XI.
everlasting to everlasting thou art God. But I shall
open no more Scriptures now in the pursuit of
this argument; I see it will be better to distribute
'em under the several branches of the text that are
yet to be consider'd,

6. That God was manifest in the flesh, has
been the faith of good people in all ages: *As they*
believ'd in God, they believ'd in Christ. This indeed, Joh. xiv. 1.
of itself, is no conclusive argument, because our
faith does not stand *in the wisdom* or holiness of 1 Cor. ii. 5.
man, but in the power of God; nevertheless, it is
not to be despis'd. This was the great persuasive
to lay aside every weight, and the sin that easily be- Heb. xii.
sets us, because we are encompass'd about with so 1, 2.
great a cloud of witnesses. We are followers of them
who thro' faith and patience do inherit the promises, vi. 12.
when we abide in the doctrine of Christ.

That this has been the opinion of those who
have serv'd their generation according to the will
of God, will scarce be denied. The quotations
we have out of the ancient writers that seem to
look another way, are to me of very little value,
for this one reason: that as far as we can judge
of the primitive church by the new Testament,
the great controversie was not so much about
Christ's divinity, as his humanity. *Many de-*
ceivers are enter'd into the world, who confess not that 2 Joh. 7.
Jesus Christ is come in the flesh: this is a deceiver
and an Antichrist. 'Twas then, as he calls it, *the*
spirit of Antichrist, and the spirit of error. The opi-
nion, I suppose, was not, that he never appear'd
to the world, but that he did not take upon him
our real nature; it was not *in the flesh.* This was
the delusion of those times, which the holy Writer
confutes in so particular a manner: *That which was*
from the beginning, which we have seen, heard, look'd up-
on,

S E R M. on, and which our hands have handled, declare we unto you.

XI. This shews that Christ had more than a resemblance of our nature. That was the error against which he delivers all his caution. Beloved,

3 Joh. iv. believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether
1, 2, 3. they are of God; because many false Prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: And this is that spirit of Antichrist whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world. 'Tis more difficult to conceive that an Angel should be made a man, than that he who is the great Mediator should be a God. I think human reason would find more arguments against the truth of his death, than against the divinity of his Person: And indeed we could not have believ'd either of these without a revelation;

1 Cor. i. for Christ crucify'd is to the Jews a stumbling-block,
23. and to the Greeks foolishness.

Now I will suppose, that this opinion continu'd some time after; therefore it's no wonder that we find passages in the writings of the Fathers, that tell us plainly that he was man; and on purpose to give this assertion the greater force and weight, they may have contriv'd a method of speaking, that has render'd 'em a little obscure to posterity. You may take these three things along with you.

First, That it was certainly right in them to lay down the truth of our Saviour's human nature: this is a fundamental article; not only to our faith as it regards the doctrines of christianity, but to our hope and comfort: without this, he is not the seed of the woman, he has made no satisfaction, nor can he present us in the body of his flesh thro' death.

Secondly,

Secondly, The vehemence of their asserting this ^{2 R M.} might be owing to the opposition that was made ^{XI.} by unbelievers: this, as I have already shewn, seems to be the prevailing opinion; and therefore perhaps some learned and good men might exceed in the way they took to deliver themselves. But,

Thirdly, It's very plain that many have spoil'd the doctrine thro' philosophy and vain deceit: I fear ^{Col. ii. 8.} there were temptations to bring some men into the church whom the grace of God never brought thither, because of their human learning. Then perhaps were too much admir'd; they came to Christ Jesus, not as learners, but as teachers, and thus threw in their own froth into the sincere milk of the word, which curdled it upon the minds of men. The Apostle came not with any ^{Cor. ii. 1, 2, 4.} *ὑπεροχὴ λόγῳ καὶ σοφίᾳ* supereminence of phrase or wisdom, declaring the testimony of God: He determin'd to know nothing among 'em but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. His speech and preaching was not in these persuading terms of human wisdom, *ὑπεροχὴ λόγῳ καὶ σοφίᾳ*, but in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power.

Those phrases, Light of Light, God of God, very God of very God, have too much of the philosopher in 'em, and too little of the christian. 'Tis not worth the while to contend about 'em, for they will be unintelligible when we have done all we can. To me it is of more value, what a company of serious persons think in their devotions, who are fill'd with a reverence for God, and a jealousy of sin, than what's agreed upon by a set of preachers, who oftentimes meet only to bite and devour one another.

That which I lay the greatest weight upon is, not so much that the Deity of Christ has been maintain'd and prov'd by persons of vast abilities, men skill'd in languages, history, and the methods
of

S E R M. of argument ; but that it is a doctrine supported by
 XI. *the witness of the Spirit* in the hearts of believers, as
 that which is *according to godliness*. : Feeling, I confess, is an individual argument : It's what a man cannot communicate to another ; but still, all the world will allow me to regard those principles that have had the best influence upon them that profess'd em. I have seen people courageous in an evil day, devout and reverent in all the acts of worship, and chearful to meet their death ; and they have given this *as a reason* of the joy and *hope that was in 'em*. I must think well of the principles, unless I think very ill of the persons.

This was the Apostle's great cordial : *Tho' I suffer these things, I shall not be ashamed, for I know in whom I have believ'd, and am persuaded that he is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day.* You see his confidence is in the power, the *ability* of him on whom he depended ; and that which represented him in this character was his infinite perfections. We stand *in the Lord, and in the power of his might* : We look for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life : His mercy brings us into that life ; and then he adds, *Now to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour be dominion and praise for ever.* We are preserv'd by the mercy of the Lord Jesus. He is here said to *present us before his glory*, as elsewhere, we read that he will *present us to himself*, and that he does it as *the only wise God our Saviour*.

This has made good people easie both in life and death : They have look'd on him as *the resurrection and the life*. What they have believ'd of his divinity has gone deeper into their holiness and comfort than any other principle could do. This has been their supporting consideration, the very thing that

that gave 'em all their courage. Thus the Spirit S E R M.
did his office by *taking the things of Christ, and shew- XI.
ing them unto men: He shews us his life and his Joh. xvi.
death, that the one was holy, and the other dread- 14, 15.
ful; but the glory that he gives to Christ is upon
other heads, as our Lord himself expounds it: *All*
that the Father has are mine, and therefore I said, he
shall take of mine, and shew it unto you. It was with
reference to his union with the Father, his share
in the glory, the dominion, in all that the Father
has, that the Spirit does thus *reveal* him.*

7. If these good people were wrong in their
opinion, it will obscure all the experimental part
of religion, the joys and pleasures with which they
gave themselves to God; first in worship, and at
last in death. What must we say for *the power*
of godliness after this? because, when they rested
on a Saviour in the last acts of faith, when they
look'd unto Jesus in the closing moments of life,
as *the author and finisher of faith*, and in that re-
garded him as God, they must go out of the world
in a gross idolatry.

Don't let any one tell me, I may give worship
to him, tho' he is a creature, only my *greatest* de-
votion is paid *thro' him* to the divine nature. I
know nothing that more expresses my dependence,
or can be call'd worship in a truer sense, than the
last offices of my faith on a death-bed. If bow-
ing my head, and giving up the ghost is not de-
votion, I know not what is; and I should be ve-
ry unwilling in that hour to rely upon one who
is less than God. As Mediator, he is not the
proper object of our faith and hope, but only in-
troduces and leads 'em in. *BY HIM we believe* 1 Pet. i.
in God, who rais'd him from the dead, and gave him 21.
glory, that our faith and hope may be *IN GOD;*
and certainly we would have our faith and hope
in God when we die. No serious person would
say

o B R M. say less than *David* did, *Into thy hands do I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeem'd it, O Lord God of truth.* Here his faith and hope were in God, as they ought to be.

5. But what shall we think of the martyr *Stephen*, when he cries out with a loud voice, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*: Did his words contain any thing less than *David's*? Was not his dependence upon the same power? Did he not regard this *Jesus* as able to save him? And would he have ventur'd his spirit into any other hands than those of a God? Dare we say, that he did not die with a faith as well plac'd as *David's*? I'm sure, if he to whom he committed his spirit is not God, he was guilty of perverting his allegiance in the greatest solemnity of all: 'twas too much to say to a creature. *David* had two things in view at that time. *First*, his own comfort, *Into thy hands do I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeem'd it*: And, *Secondly*, God's glory. This was the last thing that he could do towards it, and therefore he gave him his titles, *O Lord God of truth*. Had he apply'd to any one besides, he had lost both these ends; he had been guilty of destroying his own peace, and of alienating from God the honour that he was bound to give him; but he had none, even in heaven but God, no creature above the Angels whom he could desire besides him. And did *Stephen* come any lower, when he said, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*? He did the greatest, as well as the last thing that could be done, in a way of devotion and confidence: And had he any other in heaven besides *David's* God? If so, the redemption of mankind, instead of drawing us to God, draws us from him. He that had no partner in his honour before, must have one now; and souls under the new Testament can die into the arms of a person who is not God, tho' they under the old could not think of doing

so without horror. But doubtless when Stephen said *S E R M.*
this, he did not only conceive of Jesus as a *Jew* after *XI.*
the flesh, but as God over all blessed for evermore.

I have been told of a Gentleman with whom I had the honour of some acquaintance, that as he liv'd many years with a public character, both in the Army and Parliament, that he confess'd to an intimate friend, from whom I have the story, that he had for a long time many doubts about the Divinity of Christ; but, saith he, "Now death is coming on, I find none but a God will do; and if he is not *that*, I cannot venture my soul into *his hands*." If this is a falshood, 'tis pity it ever should be a dying principle. 'Tis an Almighty act, you know, that makes us Christians. *We are born of God; and he who has begun this good work, will perform it to the day of Christ:* And surely this can be no other than God; and therefore when we look to *Jesus* as the author and finisher of faith, it is to him as *beginning* the good work, and to him as *performing* it.

John i. 3.
Phil. i. 6.

8. If he is not God who was manifest in the flesh, our cause is no better than that of the *Jews*; nay, in some respects, a great deal worse. They had a noble dispensation: God reveal'd *himself* to 'em by signs, and wonders, and voices, by a mighty hand, and an out-stretched arm: He is said to be *in the midst of 'em*: They heard *his* voice: The cloud that cover'd the tabernacle was such a presence of the Deity as exceeded all that we know, if it was only a creature who came down among us. Now it is mention'd as the glory of these last days, that *God has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed to be the heir of all things.* There's no more in this than speaking by *Moses*, if he was not counted *worthy of more glory than Moses*; and *that* he is not as a messenger but as an author, *inasmuch as he that builded the house has more honour than the house.*

Heb. i. 1, 2.

Christ

S E R M. Christ put himself into a meaner way than *Moses* did: All the prophets that ever went before him made a greater figure; but the distinction lay in this: *They saw his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father.* God had spoken to the world, sometimes by prophets, and sometimes by priests, who were the standing ministers of his house; and suppose now at last he had sent down an Angel to be the preacher among us, this had been really a greater dispensation than what we are under: For, tho' it is confess'd that Christ had a nature above the Angels, yet, as he appear'd so much *lower than they*, that passes for nothing.

But the main glory of the dispensation consists in this, *that his name is call'd Immanuel, which is God with us.* In a lower sense, that might have been said with truth of every hero, every prophet, their captains in the field, and their priests in the temple, that God was with 'em; but it never was made the name of a person. If the most glorious Angel in heaven was to be sent down as the general of our forces, or a teacher in our assemblies, and a blessing attended him, it might be said we had the divine presence, but we must never have call'd him *Immanuel*. So that it signifies *that* in our Saviour, which it could not have done in any creature. It's the character of his *person*. You must not apply it to the spiritual presence of God with his people, for there has been more of *that* since Christ's time than there was before. He was with us in a greater glory at the day of Pentecost, and in a more populous conversion. But when this is said of a child that should be born, it is abstracted from all successes; in having *H I M*, we have *God with us*. *He that had seen him, had seen the Father*; so that there was no need to say, *shew us the Father: He was in the Father, and the Father in him.* G O D himself was manifest in the flesh. This exceeds all that ever

ever the *Jews* had ; and therefore their privileges are mention'd in a rising way, to them pertain'd the adoption, the covenants, the giving of the law, the glory, the promises. In some of these they go beyond us : We have nothing equal to the giving of the law that was ordain'd by *Angels*, and the *Glory* that cover'd their tabernacle and fill'd their temple. *Theirs were the Fathers* ; but the last, in which our interest is comprehended is greater than all the rest, that of them, as concerning the flesh, *Christ came*. How comes that to be the crowning privilege, but as he is over all, *God blessed for ever* ?

S E R M.
XII.
Rom. ix.
4. 5.

9. If he was not God, his manifestation in the flesh would not have answer'd the great ends for which it is appointed. He came as an *high priest* to make atonement, as a *King* of saints to be head over all things to his Church ; and this he could not be without the fulness of him who fills all in all.

Eph. i. 22;
23.

10. The character of Deity may be allow'd here, because the Spirit has carried it thro' all the other branches of the mystery. As a God, he is justified in the Spirit, declared to be the *Son of God* with power, by the Spirit of holiness in the Resurrection from the dead. As a God he is seen of *Angels* ; for when the Father brings the first begotten into the world, he saith, let all the *Angels* worship HIM. As a God he is preach'd unto the *Gentiles* ; look unto me, and be you sav'd all the ends of the earth ; for I am the LORD, and there is none else. As a God he is believ'd on in the world, for our faith and hope must be in God. And as a God he is receiv'd up into glory ; for to the Son it is said, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.

Rom. i. 4.
Heb. i. 6.

1 Pet. i. 23.
Heb. i. 8.



Sept. 14.
1718.

SERMON XII.

II.  HE great mystery of godliness tells us that this God was MANIFESTED. The revelation he has made of himself is the ground of all our religion. Without it there could

be no worship and no hope: Our drawing nigh to him, and all our expectations from him are only the rebound of these discoveries in which he has appear'd to us. The Psalmist has plac'd these things

Psal. xxvii. in their true order, *When thou saidst, seek ye my face,*
8. *my heart said unto thee, thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

The good of any dispensation arises from the degrees it gives us of this divine knowledge. Whatever sets out the author of our being in a truer and greater light must be the more desirable: And therefore on this account the Gospel that is preach'd in *these last days* exceeds all the older methods of devotion, because there we have a better manifestation of God. As we can have nothing higher than

John xvii. eternal life, so *this is life eternal to know the only true*
2, 3. *God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.*

Under this head I shall enquire in what characters God is to be known of men, by which it will appear, that the new Testament ought to have the preference that the holy Spirit has given it to all the other revelations that were ever made; because the main subject of our ministry is *Christ Jesus the*
2 Cor. iv. *Lord,* and the success of it is *the light of the know-*
5, 6. *ledge*

ledge of the glory of God in the person or face *ωρα* of Jesus Christ. S E R M.
XII.

The Question then before us is, what we are to know of God in order to the practice of duty, and the assurance of hope; under what notions are we to receive him into our minds? I answer, 1. As the God that made us and all the world. 2. As the object of an universal worship. 3. As our lawgiver. 4. As our judge. 5. As an offended sovereign. 6. As the author of reconciliation. 7. As the contriver of a sufficient righteousness. 8. As the fountain of that Grace by which we are restor'd to his image. 9. As the great example of holiness and purity. 10. As the giver of those joys that are laid up in another world.

Under these characters has the great God revealed himself to us. Thus he is to be known, and upon these grounds to be admir'd with reverence and a godly fear. He has in various ways and different measures given out these glories of his name; but the best appearance in which we have 'em all, is the sending of his Son *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, and the publication of his Word to mankind: Thus he has *abolish'd death, and brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel*. We have the *light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God*. Several of these manifestations are what the heathen liv'd under; but in regarding them I shall have three things in my view: First, the impressing of this truth upon you, that *thus* we are to conceive of the great God in all our applications to him: And, secondly, that even in those common ideas that we have of him, the Gospel has given us a *peculiar* evidence. And, thirdly, that all these titles belong to our blessed Saviour, which I hope you will find as we advance thro' the several particulars.

1. One manifestation that God has made of himself is in a character that gives us our most early

2 Tim. ii.
10.
2 Cor. iv.
4.

S E R M. concern with him, that he is the *Former of all things*.

XII.

We come before him with a song, and enter into his presence with thanksgiving, because he is the Lord our God, we are the work of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture; he has made us, and not we ourselves. This account of himself he has scatter'd all over the universe. 'Tis said of those who have no revealed religion,

Rom. i. 19, 20. *that what may be known of God is manifest in 'em, and shewn to us: Nay, the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that do appear, even his eternal power and Godhead. The volumes that he has publish'd of his*

Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3. *own perfections are large and copious. The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament shews his handy work; day unto day utters speech, and night unto night declares knowledge; and there is no voice or language where their speech is not heard.*

But yet even this common argument is plac'd in a better light by the coming of Jesus Christ: He lets us understand the creation to more advantage. He has adjusted, improv'd, and enlighten'd the principles of nature: So that *by faith we understand*

Heb. xi. 3. *that the worlds were made by the word of God, for the things that are were not made of things that do appear.* You must not think that natural religion gives us one God and christianity another. The Apostle

Acts xvii. 23. *tells the Athenians, Him, whom ye ignorantly worship, declare I unto you.* They might, by his instructions know the Deity in a better way than they ever would have done by observation and philosophy. He speaks of him under principles which

Ver. 24. *they confess'd; God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwells not in temples made with hands.* He argues, you see, from our primitive notions of the Divine Nature to shew the folly of all superstition: *Neither is he worshipped with mens hands, as tho' he needed any thing.* This indeed is what those confus'd ido-

laters

laters could not imagine ; but he draws it from a S E R M.
 principle which every one own'd, *seeing that he gives* XII.
to all life and breath, and all things. With this rea-
 son he batters down their impure devotions ; *We* Ver. 29.
ought not to think the Godhead is like unto silver or
gold, or stone graven by art or man's device. This
 corruption they were run into ; and tho' it is un-
 worthy of those sentiments which themselves al-
 low'd, yet it was the Gospel alone that set 'em at
 liberty, from the contradiction they offer'd to their
 own principles. *The times of this ignorance God* — 30.
wink'd at, but now he commands all men every where
to repent.

The world never knew him aright as a *Creator*,
 till he revealed himself as a *Redeemer*. In the scheme
 of salvation we see how the universe came by its
 form, and its being. When God was manifest in
 the flesh we beheld our nature. 'Tis said of him
 that came among us, that *all things were made by* John i. 3.
him, and without him was not any thing made that was 4. 10.
made ; in him was life : He was in the world, and the
world was made by him, tho' the world knew him not.
 In this revelation we contemplate the *Lord our Ma-*
ker. This truth lies open in the scheme of redemp-
 tion to be seen and read of all men. *God has in* Heb. i. 1, 2.
these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he has
appointed to be the heir of all things, by whom also he
made the worlds. This is part of the discovery that
 we have by the Gospel, *to make all men see what is* Eph. iii. 9.
the fellowship of the mystery that has been hid in God,
who created all things by Jesus Christ. When he saith, Prov. viii.
that his rejoicing was in the habitable parts of the earth, 27. 28,
and his delights among the sons of men, he takes care 29. 31.
to tell us, that at the preparing of the heavens He was
then, that He set a compass upon the face of the deep,
He established the clouds above, He gave to the sea his
decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment,
He appointed the foundations of the earth.

S E R M. XII. The child that is born to us is no other than the mighty God. This Lord in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of His hands : They shall perish, but He remains ; as a vesture, He will fold 'em up, and they shall be chang'd, but He is the same, and His years shall not fail. The honours they pay him in heaven are upon this head. The Apostle John had much the same vision with the Prophet Isaiah : The Angels about his throne are crying out, *holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty* ; and what they add to it (*who is, and was, and is to come*) determines the application of the titles, that these things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of H I M. They cast their crowns before his throne saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.* This is said of Him, who upholds all things by the word of his power, and who, having by himself purg'd our sins, for ever sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. The characters are conjoin'd, He is the head of the body the Church, the beginning, he is before all things, and by him all things consist. He that has ascended into heaven, and descended, has gather'd the winds in his fists, and bound the waters in a garment, and establish'd all the ends of the earth. In the last act of resignation we commit the keeping of our Souls to Him, as a faithful Creator. It may be said of Him in the whole revelation of the Gospel, *Is not he thy Father who has bought thee, has not he made thee and establish'd thee ?*

2. He is manifested as the object of universal worship : This flows from the former as a practical inference : *Let us worship and bow down before the Lord our Maker. He has made of one blood all nations of men that dwell on the face of the earth, and determin'd the times before appointed, and fix'd the bounds of their habitation that they might seek him, if haply*

haply they might feel after him, and find him, for he S E R M.
XII.
is not far from any one of 'em.

This argument is more prefs'd in the Gospel than in any other dispensation; as the Apostles told those at *Lystra*, *We are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you, that ye should turn from these* xiv. 15,
16. *vanities to the living God, who has made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffer'd all nations to walk in their own ways; but now, in this revelation, he shews 'em what a violence they offer'd to their own principles: tho' the Gospel does not give 'em their notions of God, yet it works and rules 'em. Their opinion that he is the author of all things, passes for nothing; it does 'em no good till a true religion sets it home; for, none of 'em saith, Where is God my maker, who gives songs in the night? Thus* Job xxxvi.
10. *we come to be directed in our worship: and therefore the Ephesians, who were superstitious enough, being keepers of the image that fell from Jupiter, are said to be not only without Christ, aliens to the common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the cove-* Eph. ii.
12. *nants of promise, but without God in the world. Tho' they pretended to worship him, their notions were either false or feeble; their belief in God as the supreme cause, and the last end, was totally disabled. These truths lay in their minds as in a hospital, unactive and impotent. They could not worship him even as a Creator. It is said of the Thessalonians, that upon the preaching of the Gospel, They turn'd to God from idols, to serve the living and true* 1 Thes. i.
9, 20. *God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. Tho' these notions seem to be scatter'd over the world, yet there was a time when the Galatians knew not God, but* Gal. iv. 8. *did service to those who by nature were no Gods; but he is now manifested as the hearer of prayer, that* Psal. lxxv. 2. *unto him all flesh may come.*

S E R M. He that came in the flesh has made known him-
 XII. self as the object of adoration. We have a pro-

W prophecy of the happiness that is to flow over all the
 earth: *The ends of the world shall remember and turn*
 Psal. xxii. *unto the Lord, the kindreds of the nations shall worship*
 27. 28. *before him, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is*
 29. *the governor among the nations. All that be fat upon*
earth shall eat and worship, and they that go down to
the dust shall bow before him. The lxxii^d is call'd a
Psalms for Solomon, but you will by the characters
be convinc'd, that a greater than Solomon is men-
 tion'd there: *All kings shall fall down before him,*
 lxxii. 11, *all nations shall serve him, his name shall endure for*
 17. *ever, his name shall continue as long as the sun; men*
shall be bless'd in him, and all nations shall call him
blessed.

3. Another manifestation that we have of God,
 and in which the Gospel exceeds all that went be-
 fore, is that he is a *Lawgiver*; from him we re-
 Mic. vi. 8. *ceive the rules of our Duty: He has shewn what is*
good, and what he requires of us. Some degree of
this light was given to the heathen: They having
 Rom. ii. *not the law, were a law unto themselves: they had the*
 14. 15. *work of the law written in their hearts, their con-*
science also bearing 'em witness, and their thoughts in
the mean while accusing or excusing one another.
'Twas an aggravation of their sin, that when they
 i. 21. *knew God they glorified him not as God, but became*
vain in their imaginations.

But what are all these discoveries, if compar'd to
 Tit. ii. 11, *the grace of God, that brings salvation, teaching to*
 12. *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly,*
righteously, and godly in this present evil world? The
Jews had such a manifestation for several ages, as had
not been given to any other nation: He sent his
 Pf. cxlvii. *word unto Jacob, his statutes and judgments unto*
 16. 19. *Israel. But in these last days, since he has spoken*
to us by his Son, the way of God is taught more
perfectly,

perfectly. The law is not *made void thro' faith*; S E R M.
but as he came in Person to fulfil it, so his Gospel XII.
is given to *establish it*. 'Tis only a God who can
give a command. This character is united to those Rom. iii.
that contain the greatest glory: *The Lord is our 31.*
judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, Mat. v. 17.
and he will save us. And therefore, Rom. iii.
ult.

If you find that He who was manifest in the
flesh, took upon him this title, (as the *Jews* said,
he *made himself equal with God*) this, without Joh. v. 18.

a Divine Nature, would have been arrogance in
him, as much as any other man. We must con-
found the characters of Christ and Antichrist, if
they are both creatures. It stands as the glaring
impiety of the latter, that he *exalts himself above* 2 Thes. ii.
all that is called God, or is worshipp'd; that he sits in 4.
the temple of God, giving out himself that he is God.

He makes laws for conscience, and does that which
is peculiar to the Deity: and if the great Redeem-
er did so too, nothing could take off the charge
of blasphemy, but a supposition that he was truly
God: and thus did the Apostles declare him. Peter
tells *Cornelius* of their *preaching peace by Jesus Christ* Acts x. 36.
who is Lord of all. Paul was not without law to God, 1 Cor. ix.
but ἐν νόμῳ & Χριστῷ *under the law to Christ.* Thus he 22.
made his approach to him at first, *Lord, what wilt* Acts ix. 6.

THOU have me to do? This is language that ought
not to be us'd to a creature; and you may observe
that he said it, after he had enquir'd who this Lord
was, and receiv'd his answer, *I am Jesus of Nazareth*
whom thou persecutest. He resigns himself to this

Person with the same unreserve as David did, *Lord, I* Psal. cxvi.
am thy servant, I am thy servant. 'Tis as much as 16.

if he had said, *I will hear what God the Lord will* xxxv. 8.
speak. Agreeable to this is the stile of a Redeemer:

he tells *Ananias* of *Saul*, *He is a chosen vessel unto* Acts ix.
ME, to bear MY name before the Gentiles, and kings, 15.
and the children of Israel. *Ananias comes to him*
with

S E R M. with that message, Brother Saul, the Lord, even
 XII. J E S U S that appear'd to thee in the way that thou
 camest, has sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight,
 ver. 17. and be fill'd with the Holy Ghost. We are told in
 this place that the Lord who sent him was Jesus.
 Compare this with Acts xxii. 24. where you find
 the same story, and there it is, *The God of our fa-
 thers has chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will,
 and see the just One, and hear the voice of his mouth;
 and now, why tarriest thou? wash away thy sins, and
 be baptized, calling on the name of the LORD. What
 Lord? You read afterwards, I saw HIM, saying un-
 to me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jeru-
 salem, for they will not receive thy testimony concern-
 ing ME.*

'Tis with this mixture of characters, some relat-
 ing to the humane nature and some to the divine,
 that he repeats the story to King Agrippa. As he
 there saith, he receiv'd his mission immediately
 from Christ himself, who spake thus to him, I
 xxvi. 16. will make thee a minister and a witness of the things
 17. 18. that thou hast seen, and of those things in which I will
 appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and
 from the Gentiles to whom now I send thee, to open
 their eyes, and to turn 'em from darkness to light, and
 from the power of Satan to God, to give 'em remissi-
 on of sins, and an inheritance among them that are
 sanctified by faith in M E. Christ undertook to de-
 liver him from the people, and with regard to that
 ver. 22. promise the Apostle saith, *Having obtained help from
 G O D, I continue to this day.* "He that thus far
 "help'd me is the same God who said that he would
 "deliver me." How would they go upon a design
 of opening peoples eyes, and turning 'em from Sa-
 2: Cor. ii. tan, if it was not a God who caused them to triumph,
 14. and made manifest the good savour of his knowledge by
 them in every place?

4. The Gospel gives us a manifestation of the great God under the character of a Judge. This agrees with those sentiments that have left some tincture of religion all over the world. The heathen have their inward fears of a judgment to come; that there will be future enquiries: Conscience witnesses to this according to its office; for it is the candle of the Lord searching into the innermost parts of the belly. And yet this opinion, that mankind believes in general, is brought in among those that we never could have without a particular revelation, that God is judge of all, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant: And the blood of sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of Abel. Those two principles seem to be riveted in us; idolatry has not choak'd 'em, that it is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment.

S E R M.
XII.

24.

Heb. xii.
24.

Rev. ii. 23.

Pf. cxlvii.

5.
2 Cor. v.
10.

Now, he that performs this work must be a God. The question is not whether he that sits upon the throne, will not appear in our nature; but his capacity to go thro' the grand inquest must arise from another nature. As the Son of man, he might be pure, holy, harmless, undefil'd, and separate from sinners; but this could not furnish him with the knowledge of the secrets of all hearts: And therefore, tho' he is like the sons of men, yet he speaks to his people in the language of the great God, I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he, who searches the hearts and reins, and I will give to every one of you according to your works. It may be said of such an one, Great is this Lord, and of great power, and his understanding is infinite. If we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST, there to receive what we have done in the body, whether it be good or evil, it argues the highest perfection in him.

The Jews could never conceive that an ability to judge the world was separable from the Divine Nature

SER M. Nature. None but he who form'd the spirit of man
XII. *within him*, is capable of searching the heart and the

reins. The Lord God is the judge of the earth:
Pf. xciv. *he that planted the eye, he that form'd the ear.* Our
1. 2. 9.
l. 3. 4. 5. *God shall come, and not keep silence: he shall call to*
6. 7. *the heavens from above, and to the earth that he may*

judge his people: the heavens shall declare his righteousness, for GOD is judge HIMSELF. Hear, O my people, and I will speak, I am God, even thy God.

Thus the *Jews* were oblig'd to think; and can we suppose that the Gospel has committed the supreme judgment to one who has not infinite perfections? Did their dispensation under the old Testament proclaim, and that so truly, that *God was judge of all*: And does ours under the new, by placing it in the hands of the Son, make it to be the work of a creature? Must we say that the *Jewish* religion over-rated the matter, and that the *Christian* shews us a great deal less will do than we were taught to imagine before! That tho' they us'd to think that nothing beneath the Divine Nature was fit for the judgment seat, yet we find that a mere titular God will do well enough for the greatest solemnity that ever was perform'd? What sense then must we put upon those words? *I saw a great*
Rev. xx. *white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face*
11, 12. *the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for 'em.* I can't but think when he speaks of this mighty Person, he means the same whom we read of in the next verse, *I saw the dead, small and great, stand before GOD.* Tho' he is call'd the Son of man, when he enters upon the judgment, yet he is then said to come *in the glory of the Father.*

5. God is manifested to us as one whom we have dishonour'd; the offended party. *All flesh*
Rom. iii. *has sinn'd and fallen short of the glory of God.* This
23. *is the voice of all true religion; and thus he is discover'd*

cover'd in and thro' a mediator. Behold, saith he S E R M. XII.
 to the Jews, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee XII.
 in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I Exod. xxiii. 10.
 have prepar'd. Beware of him, and obey his voice,
 provoke him not, for he will not pardon your trans-
 gressions, for my name is in him; but if thou shalt in-
 deed obey HIS voice, and do all that I speak (you
 see how these are mingled and wove together)
 then will I be an enemy to thine enemies, and an ad-
 versary to thine adversaries, for mine Angel shall go
 before thee. This he repeats, I will send an Angel ch. xxxiii. 2.
 before thee, and I will drive out the inhabitants. I
 take the promise to be the same, when he saith,
 MY presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee ver. 14.
 rest. No less than this would satisfy Moses, for
 his answer is, If THY presence go not with me, car-
 ry us not up hence (they could take up with no
 lower than a God) for wherein shall it be honour,
 that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight?
 is it not in that THOU goest with us? What he calls
 his Angel in one edition of the promise, he calls his
 presence in another. The Prophet brings both these
 terms together, In all their affliction he was afflicted, Isa. lxiii. 9, 10.
 and the Angel of his presence (He that was always
 before him, daily his delight, he) sav'd 'em, he
 bare 'em, and carried 'em all the days of old. This
 Angel they must obey, and not provoke; but they
 did provoke him when they refus'd to go into the
 promis'd land. They tempted the Lord saying, Is
 the Lord, is Jehovah, among us or not? He calls this
 the day of provocation, and the day of temptation in Ps. xcvi. 3.
 the wilderness. Then they provok'd him, or they
 provok'd his Angel, contrary to the rule that had
 been given 'em. This in the new Testament is
 call'd their tempting of Christ. And we are told, 1 Cor. x. 9.
 that Christ is a Son over his own house, whose house Heb. iii. 6.
 we are, if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of
 our hope firm unto the end. We are not to use him

S E R M. as they did; fly off at last, when we should just
 XII. go into the promis'd land; give way and fall back,
 but hold on our hope unto the end: *For the Holy*
 ver. 7. *Ghost saith, To day if you will hear his voice, harden*
not your hearts: Whose voice? the voice of GOD,
saith the Psalmist, The great God, the great King a-
bove all Gods, who has the strength of hills in his
hand: The voice of CHRIST, saith the Apostle.
 Judge then by comparing spiritual things with spi-
 ritual, whether or no he who was manifest in the
 flesh is not the *God of Israel.*

We see that God who is a consuming fire, be-
 comes conversible by appearing in our nature.
 Disobedience to him, as the light that came into
 the world, is the great condemnation, which shews
 the importance of his name. *If ye believe not that*
 Joh.iii.36. *I am he, ye shall die in your sins: he that believes*
not is condemn'd already; the wrath of God abides on
him. And, is want of duty to a creature so very
 dangerous? Must it be a damning thing that we
 fail in our respect to one who is not God? I look
 upon that as the greatest abomination which the
Papists have brought into their religion, that a con-
 tempt of the Pope, or disobedience to his laws, is
 a higher crime than blasphemy. And what is it
 that makes their notion so horrible, but the infi-
 nite distance of a poor sinful man from the supreme
 God? If he was really as great and good as he
 declares himself, he might demand all this homage.
 And shall we suppose the same reproach upon
 Christianity itself? Shall it be more dangerous to
 refuse Christ Jesus, than to violate a righteous law?
 Is the main sin of which the holy Spirit convinces
 Joh.xvi.9. *the world, their not believing on HIM?* Is it this
 that binds all our other guilt upon us? And is not
 He a God whom we thus distinguish? if not, we
 are guilty of *serving the creature more than the Crea-*
tor.

6. When God manifests himself, it is as the author of our reconciliation. He has a desire to the work of his own hands; without this discovery all the rest had been in vain. 'Tis to no purpose that he is our Creator, if by breaking his law, we have reduc'd things to such an extremity, that he that made us will have no mercy on us, and he that form'd us will shew us no favour. He is our Law-giver, but that raises in us no other than dreadful expectations; for as many as are under the law are under the curse, because it is written, Cursed is every one, who continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do 'em. As he is our judge, we are fill'd with the terrors of the Lord: there is a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation; but in this revelation, the love and kindness of God our Saviour towards man has appear'd.

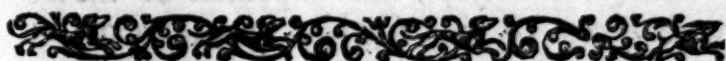
Now, he that makes this discovery can be no other than a God: he made known his resentment, and did it in a way suitable to his Majesty: *Who knows the power of thine anger? according to thy fear, so is thy wrath!* and from Him the day-star on high is to shine forth: he employ'd his messengers in all ages to give notice of this salvation: Prophets, and Kings, and righteous men have foretold what should happen in the fulness of time. And *He who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake unto the fathers in times past by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son.* What was there in this Son more than the other messengers, if we are not to consider him as a God? 'Tis the message that we are chiefly concern'd in, the thing itself that is brought, and not the person that brings it: so that 'tis the same to us, whether it comes by a shepherd or a king, by a man or an Angel. But when he tells us of speaking by his Son, 'tis plain we are call'd to admire not only the doctrine but the preacher, who is the heir of

S E R M. of all things, the brightness of the Father's glory, and
 XII. the express image of his person. To this agrees what
 our Lord saith in the parable, That a king sent to
 his subjects one servant, and him they shamefully
 entreated; again he sent others, whom they
 wounded, and ston'd, and kill'd: at last, saith he,
I will send to them my son. The demand of their
 allegiance took its value from the king himself,
 to whom they ow'd it, not from the quality of
 the men that brought it. But when the son came
 they were to consider not merely what he said, but
 who he was. This, say they, *is the heir*; he is a
 party in the claim, *therefore come let us kill him.*

If there was not the same regard due to Christ
 that there is to the Father, we should be no gain-
 ers by his coming, John the Baptist might have
 done as well. God could have told us all by Him
 that he did by Jesus, and might have convey'd
 the same power of working miracles to the one,
 that was so surprizing in the other; but speaking
 to us *by his Son*, is taking a way that is infinitely
 Heb. xii. above all the rest. Others are said to *speak on*
 25. *earth*, and he, as distinct from every one besides,
 Job iii. 13. does alone *speak from heaven.* No man ascended up
 to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even
 the Son of man who is in heaven. In other cases the
 message greaten'd the man: nothing higher could
 be said of a Prophet, than that the word of the
 Lord was with him. *Jeremiah* was a child, *Amos*
 a gatherer of sycamore fruit, but they were en-
 nobled by the word they came with, because it
 was not their own; they had receiv'd it from
 God. But in this case the message takes a value
 from the person that brings it, it does not give
 him his dignity, but rather supposes it: 'tis to be
 taken for granted, that *he is the brightness of the Fa-*
ther's glory; if he was not *that*, the dispensation
 that he fill'd would not have exceeded all the rest;
 but

but *being* so, he did by *himself* purge away our S E R M. sins. XIII.

He preach'd righteousness and salvation in another way than we do. The word of reconciliation is committed to us, but we send people to *him*, as he invited 'em to himself: *If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; in him was life, and that life was the light of men.* Joh. vii. 37. *John the Baptist* was a burning and a shining light, yet he was not that light, in the more eminent sense of the word, but only sent to bear witness of that light; for *Christ is the true light that lightens every man who comes into the world.* These things shew us, that He of whom they are spoken, can be no other than the true God. All the revelation of the Bible places him in that view. We are taught to regard him as such; to believe in him, to come to him, and to rest our souls upon his righteousness and strength.



S E R M O N XIII. Sept. 28. 1718.

VII.



O D is MANIFESTED to us as the author or contriver of that righteousness in which we are justified.

Here the light of nature fails us; the world with all *their wisdom knew not God.* 1 Cor. i. 21. They had apprehensions that he made 'em, rul'd 'em, and would judge 'em: nay, he *left not himself without witness* to his mercy, *giving 'em rain and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and glad-* Acts xiv. 17. *ness.* They found his bounty in this world, and had some loose and general hopes of meeting it in another; but the way how this should be brought

N

about

S E R M. about with a glory to his justice, was a wisdom hid
XIII. from ages and generations.

- Now, by the Gospel we are not only told, that
- 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. *God is reconciling the world unto himself, but the method into which he has thrown the whole design, lies open to our faith and love; that it is in Christ Jesus, not imputing our trespasses to us, but having made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, we are made the righteousness of God in him.* 'Tis here alone we can learn what security he has given to the honour of his name, and what compass he takes in the diffusions of his love.
- Rom. iii. 25, 26. *Him has God set forth to be a propitiation for our sins thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, thro' the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus.* The dispensation that shews us all this, is the most fitted to our happiness. *What the law could not do in that it was weak thro' the flesh, the impossible of the law τὸ ἀδύνατον τῆ νόμου* God has brought about by
- ch. viii. 3, 4. *sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by sin (the imputation of it, or the sacrifice that was made for it) has condemn'd sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfill'd in us.* Under the new Testament we have the best light both into the design that God has form'd, and the methods by which he will promote it. *The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.* This made the Apostle say he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. The expression contains a great deal more than it opens: he was not ashamed, i. e. he delighted, he gloried in it: no labour could make him weary, no sufferings could make him blush, because this
- Rom. i. 16, 17. *Gospel was the power of God to the salvation of every one that believes; and that which conveys so noble a title to it is, because therein the righteousness of God is reveal'd from faith to faith.* Here

Here faith sees what it has to trust to, and where the soul must keep relying: do it over and over again, and that is upon *the righteousness of God*. S E R M.
XIII.

This is the name that it often goes by. We are told that the *Jews being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God*. Rom. x. 3.

This title, the righteousness of God, is to be understood of a righteousness that God has contriv'd, and God brought in: that the Person who gives it to us is God: that this is the sense of the word, appears from the opposition in which it is plac'd to a righteousness of *their own*. What was this but their obedience either to the moral or the ceremonial law? Now, *that* might be call'd the righteousness of God, as their zeal for it was a *zeal of God*, ver. 1. It's what he had appointed and commanded; nay, he tells 'em, this should be *their righteousness before the nations of the earth*; but then, it is what themselves brought in. Now *the righteousness of God*, which bears the name in this place, is distinguish'd from theirs, and the difference between 'em is in nothing else but this, that their righteousness was the work of men, the obedience of creatures, but the other was the obedience of a God. Our Saviour when he died had this before him, as the Angel Gabriel tells Daniel, that *the Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself*: Who was it for then? for those that wanted his benefits, when *he finish'd transgression, made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness*. Dan. ix.
26.

This was it that the *Jews* were ignorant of, and refus'd to submit themselves unto: they could not take Christ as *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes*. Rom. x. 4. That which they rejected was the righteousness of God, which none but an infinite nature was capable of giving to the world, and therefore the A-

S E R M. postle is very full and particular in describing it.

XIII. His desire was to be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is thro' the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Faith regards it as it stands in itself, and then receives or applies it as belonging to us. What faith depends on is the righteousness of God; something that an infinite Nature has done.

Upon this account the Person who came to save us in the name of the Lord is call'd, as no creature can be, *Jehovah our righteousness*: that's an incommunicable title, what God never gave to another: *Thou alone whose name is Jehovah, art the most*

6. *High over all the earth.* There are Gods many, and Lords many, but there is no more than one *Jehovah*: and if He in whom we are justified joins the greatest word that we have in any language with the relation that he bears to us, if he is call'd *Jehovah our righteousness*, it shews that he who made the atonement is God. Under this title, which is all divine, has he recommended himself to the faith and the joys of his people: *Sing unto*

Ps. lxxxiii. 4. *God, sing praises to his name, extol him that rides upon the heavens, by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.* His riding upon the heavens does plainly belong to those chariots of God which are twenty thousand, even thousands of Angels. And when does he use 'em? what mighty period do these words refer to? You will see by the next verse, *Thou hast*

ver. 17. *ascended up on high*; and for this we are to extol him by his name *Jah*. The author of that righteousness in which we are to be found must be a God; one that is fellow to the Lord of hosts.

7. This gave a virtue to all his sufferings, and therefore we read of the church of God, which HE purchas'd with his own blood. If an Angel had come down into our nature, blood would never have been

been ascrib'd to him any farther than he was S E R M. XIII.
 man. It was only the humane nature that could bleed, and therefore whatever is more than man was not to *endure* but to *dignifie* the sufferings. Now, on purpose to let us know, that nothing but a divine atonement could answer the demands of a divine justice, we are told that the purchase was made by the blood of God. *The blood of Christ, who thro' the eternal Spirit offer'd himself without spot to God, is to purge our conscience.* And the God of peace brought again from the dead the Lord Jesus Christ, Heb. ix. 14. xiii. 10.
 thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant. Upon this, God's pardoning a sinner becomes an act of equity: *the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth from all sin,* Joh. i. 7. 9.
 and therefore he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

8. God is manifest as the author and fountain of those graces by which we are wrought into his image. In order to be happy with him, we must be conform'd to him, being *renew'd in the spirit* Eph. iv. 23. 24.
our minds, and putting on the new man, which κατα Θεον according to God, *is created in righteousness.* It is impossible that heaven itself should make him glorious, and us blessed, if *his* nature was full of resentment, and *ours* of provocation. If two cannot *walk* together except they be agreed, much less can they *live* together in the duration of another state: that would only be an eternal broil, an everlasting jealousy. Now, as he has reveal'd himself to be our lawgiver, so from Him we are to derive the whole of that Being, that will make us the people of his hand, and the sheep of his pasture.

And the Gospel tells us upon this head, that all our religion comes from the *only name that is* Act. iv. 12.
given under heaven among men. That's all along the language of the new Testament: *The law was* Joh. i. 17.
given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; not barely the revelation, but the convey-

- SER M. *ance came by him: for as he was full of grace and*
 XIII. *truth, so of his fulness we have receiv'd, and grace*
 1. *for grace. This is the record that God has given to us*
 Joh. v. *eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has*
 10. *the Son has life, and he that has not the Son of God*
has not life. 'Tis express'd in such a way as tells
 ver. 20. *us, we can only have it by a mystical union with*
him. We are in him that is true, even his Son Jesus
 Joh. i. 4. *Christ: this is the true God, and this is eternal life:*
in him was life, and that life was the light of men.
In him was life, as in a God; for if you take it
 Joh. v. 26. *in any lower sense, 'tis no more than may be said*
of a man, or of a worm. But, as he tells us in
 ver. 21. *another place, As the Father has life in himself, so has*
he given to the Son to have life in himself; and, as
 Joh. xv. 4. *the Father quickens the dead, so the Son quickens whom*
 5. *he will. It may be said of us as to a religious*
 existence, *In him we live and move, and have our be-*
 Gal. iv. 19. *ing: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it*
 Eph. iii. *abide in the vine, no more can we except we abide in*
 17. *him: without him we can do nothing. When grace*
 is begun or receiv'd, *Christ is form'd in us; he dwells*
 Joh. xvii. *in our hearts by faith. By the union that he has*
 23. *with his people, every principle is maintain'd, as*
he tells the Father, I in them, and thou in me. Tho'
 he was then going out of the world, he still de-
 sires to be *in them*, which cannot be understood
 of an external conversation with 'em. *I have de-*
 Joh. xvii. *clar'd thy name unto them, and will declare it, that*
 ult. *the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,*
and I in them. He considers himself in them, tho'
 he was to be in heaven, and they upon earth, ac-
 cording to the promise that he had formerly given
 'em; *Because I live, ye shall live also, and in that day*
 ch. xiv. *ye shall know that I am in the Father, and the Father*
 19, 20. *in me, and I in you. From this the Apostle argues*
 an immortality both in our principles and our hea-
 Rom. viii. *ven: If Christ be in us, the spirit is life, and Christ*
 10. *in us is our hope of glory.*

Now,

Now, He that sustains these characters can be no other than God. It is *the one God and Father of all, who is above all, and thro' all, and in you all.* We have a communion with the Angels, but are never said to be *in them*, or have them *in us*; whereas, if the expression means nothing but a mutual fellowship, it might well enough be us'd in that sense. But the word signifies a great deal more; an union, subsistence, and a derivation, that none but the Divine Nature can give us. *God dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. Whoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him, and he in God. God is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.* If there is no more design'd by this dwelling in God than our doing what pleases him, we might be said to dwell in the Saints and Angels; but the words signify an happiness which none but a God can give. They express something that is peculiar to Him, and what would never be affirm'd of us with relation to any creature. Therefore when it is said that *Christ is in us*, it denotes His glory as well as our dependence.

There is no such union with any but a God. We are *born of the incorruptible seed*, this is the same thing with our *tasting that the Lord is gracious*. 'Tis a phrase that we often meet with in the book of Psalms, *O taste and see that the Lord is good!* And it is too much to be affirm'd of a creature; no finite being is capable of giving us such an experience. Now, what Lord is that whom we have *tasted to be gracious*, and to whom we must be still *coming as to a living stone*? who is this that our faith is held to as its object where it fixes, as its fountain where it feeds! who, besides the supreme Being, can give us the first experience of religion,

S E R M. and call us to a continual dependence upon Him ?

XIII.

W 'Tis too much for any but himself to do it, And yet this Lord, this living stone, can be no other than our Saviour : for he is describ'd afterwards
 Ver. 4. by his lower character, as *disallow'd of men ; but chosen of God, and precious*. From him we have deriv'd the first life, from him we must derive the
 Ver. 5. rest ; by him we are *living stones, and are built up a spiritual house*.

Our graces are his work, and what does that import but an Almighty arm ? *David* ascribes it to
 Pſal. li. 10. no less a power than what made the world ; *Create in me a clean heart, O God* : They that have this
 John i. 13. change are *born of God*. Who must He be that
 Pſal. cx. 3. shall make a *people willing in the day of his power* ? He
 Acts xxvi. gave *Paul* his commission ; he sent him to *turn the*
 18. *Gentiles from darkness to light* : And yet none but
 2 Cor. iv. that *God* who *caused light to shine out of darkness* can
 6. *shine into our hearts*. He saith to his Disciples, *my*
 John xiv. *peace I give unto you, not as the world gives give I*
 27. *unto you*. And what was this but Omnipotence, a
 Isa. lvii. *creating the fruit of the lips peace, peace, a sending*
 19. *out his Word, and healing them*.

9. God has manifested himself as the great example and pattern of all our holiness. Religion is
 1 Pet. i. 16. a likeness to Him. This was his command to the
Jews, Be ye holy, for I am holy. He would never direct our thoughts in those unlimited terms to any but himself, *He that does the truth comes to the*
 John iii. *lights that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are*
 21. *wrought in God*, And therefore,

If we find that Christ is propos'd as our pattern in language that only belongs to an infinite Being, we shall see that it is in maintenance of his character. 'Tis true, his obedience to the law *under which he was made*, is the proper example that he has left behind him for us to follow his steps. We are to
 Eph. v. 1. be *followers of him as dear children, and to walk in love,*

love, as he has loved us; and that gives us boldness in S E R M. XIII.
the day of Judgment, that as he was, so we are in
this present world.

But, besides this, our Faith regards him as a pattern under a more glorious consideration. Our religion, even in heaven, is a resemblance of him: *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* 1 John iii. 2. Like whom? Like the Great God; *David would not use the language about any other: As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness, when I awake, I shall be satisfied with THY likeness.* And again, Psal. xvii. 15. *With Thee is the fountain of life, and in THY light we shall see light.* Nor does the Apostle speak of xxxvi. 9. any lower person, when he saith, *What manner of love has the Father bestow'd upon us, that we should be call'd the Sons of GOD? tho' without any variation of the phrase he goes on to tell us, Therefore the world knows us not, because it knew not HIM.* It knew not that God, whose Sons we are. Belo-Ver. 2. *ved, now we are the Sons of God; and when HE, to whom we are thus related, shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.* What does he say less, than that we shall behold his face in righteousness, and be satisfy'd with his likeness? If one of these verses contains as much as the other, it means as much. If the words run as high, certainly the sense must do so too. Nay, from these offices of our Faith, he goes on to tell us, that *he who has this hope in him purifies himself even as HE* Ver. 3. *is pure.*

Is any but a God to be such a rule and pattern of our religion! Are not these words too much for a creature, *Be ye holy, for I am holy?* Yes surely: *Hannah's* observation is eternally true; *There is none holy as the Lord; for there is none besides him.* 1 Sam. ii. 2. Our Saviour saith, *there is none good but One, that is God; and yet He himself is call'd the Holy One.* Mat. xix. 17. Imitation is one great act of reverence; and there- Acts iii. 14. fore

S E R M. fore when any example below a God is set before

XIII. us, 'tis always under qualifications; *Be ye followers of me*, saith the Apostle, *even as I also am of Christ*.

1 Cor. xi. But absolute, unreserv'd, conformity is only to him

1.

that made us. Thus we express our homage as well as our affection, in a way that we dare not

John xii. use to an Angel. *If any man serve M E*, saith Christ,
26. *let him follow M E*.

10. Another manifestation that we have of God is, as he is the author and giver of those joys that are laid up for us in another world. There can

Psal. lxxiii. be no happiness but what comes from Him. *Thou*

24.

—xvi. 2. *wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to T H Y glory. T H O U wilt shew me the path*

of life, as if life were no where else; in T H Y presence there is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore. This made him say, *Whom have I in heaven but T H E E?* He hop'd to meet

Heb. xii. there with an innumerable company of Angels, and
22, 23. *the Spirits of just men made perfect*; to sit down with

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; but none of these could make him blessed. He only regarded his God un-

Psal. lxxiii. der that character: *Thou art my portion for ever. The*
26. *Lord is my portion, saith my Soul.* And indeed, up-

Lam. iii.

24.

on this head, human reason agrees with the light of the Gospel, that no less than an infinite nature can satisfy either the necessity or the desires of a Soul. And therefore whoever represents himself as the author of every good and perfect gift, must be

Jam. i. 17. either *the Father of lights, or an impostor*.

Here the question is, whether under this notion our thoughts are not call'd up to a Mediator. He

2 Tim. i. did not only appear *to abolish death, but to bring*
10. *life and immortality to light*. He made heaven better known than ever it was before: But, besides that,

Phil. i. 23. 'tis his gift as well as his discovery. Our happi-

1 Thes. iv. ness is a *being with Christ*; that is, *being ever with*

17.

Rev. vii. *the Lord: He that sits upon the throne shall dwell a-*
15. *mong*

mong 'em. Upon this authority he speaks, *They* S E R M.
XIII.
are my sheep, and, they shall never perish; but I give
to 'em eternal life, and no man shall pluck 'em out of
My hand. He adds, as a farther security, *My Fa-* John x.
28, 29.
ther who gave 'em to me is greater than all, and none
shall pluck 'em out of my Father's hands. If he was
to be consider'd only in his human nature, what he
here saith would be no argument. For tho' the
Father that gave 'em to him was greater than all,
yet if himself was not so too, they might be lost;
for it was *His own hand* that held 'em. Their pro-
tection is not taken from the greatness of the gi-
ver, but from the greatness of the keeper. And
therefore, in asserting that none shall pluck 'em out
of *his hand*, he goes upon the ground, that's men-
tion'd in the very next words, *I and my Father are* Ver. 30:
one.

Does it only mean one in design, in consent and
agreement? that's no more than may be affirm'd of
any Saint or Angel in heaven. Every inhabitant
there may say, that God and He are one; what
God saith He approves. But such an oneness is
no argument that those creatures can hold fast what-
ever the Father has given 'em. The words under
this interpretation may be applied to *Adam*. God
and he were one, when he was first put into para-
dise; there was a full harmony between 'em. He
had a principle of grace and holiness; the Father
that gave him these was greater than all; but yet
he could not say, that none was able to pluck 'em
out of his hands; for they were pluck'd out. Now,
if Christ's being one with the Father does include
an ability *in himself* to keep what is given him, it
must be upon the same foundation, that He (as
well as the Father) *is greater than all*; for other-
wise what he here saith could not be true. With-
out this he hath no power, no right to give eter-
nal life.

S E R M. Consider him in our nature, and this is what he
 XIII. never assum'd. When the two sons of *Zebedee* came with their mother, begging that the one of 'em might sit at his right hand, and the other at his left in his kingdom, he tells 'em it was not his to give, but *it should be given to them for whom it was prepar'd of his Father*. So that, you see, he disdains even the power of granting preferments upon earth; as man, he did not pretend to this: and therefore, if He, that saith *this is not mine to give*, talks in another place of giving what is infinitely greater, he must be consider'd as bearing two natures. He that would not venture to fix a precedence among his people, would never have dar'd to say *they shall not perish*, if he was not one with the Father in the greatest sense that the word can bear.

Rom. ii. 'Tis the righteous judgment of GOD that renders
 5, 6. to every man according to his deeds. And yet, He that
 Rev. xxii. comes quickly has his reward with him, to give every
 12, 20. man according as his work shall be; and who is this, but he that testify'd of those things; you have the sense of the church upon that head: *Amen, even so come, LORD JESUS*. It is plain, thus the *Jews* understood him, and therefore would have ston'd him for blasphemy, because, say they, *Thou being a man, makest thyself God*. If he meant no more by these words, *I and my Father are One*, than what a modern interpretation amounts to, he might easily have pleaded not guilty. But he rather heightens the provocation, by repeating his pretensions: Is it not
 John x. written in your law, *I said ye are gods? if he called*
 33. *them gods to whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I said I am the Son of God?*

He here fixes the great distinction betwixt himself and the whole world, that they were people

to whom the word of God came; He was the only person that brought it: *Sanctifying and sending him into the world*, are titles that may be understood in a lower sense of all the Prophets; but it's plain he uses 'em here in a way that is peculiar to himself; therefore he tells 'em that he does not call himself God in the way that he has call'd men so. Not by virtue of an office; no office could make him the Son of God: This title by which he was to be known signified more than ever belong'd to them, whom he had called gods. What then does he put it upon? *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* What are those! The works that his Father commanded? *That any good man or Prophet might have said: but it is evident, he speaks of those works which none but the Father himself could do; and from hence he concludes a great deal more than a Divine assistance, which God had given to his servants in all ages. And upon this ground he asserts a personal union, Tho' ye believe not me,* Ver. 37. *i. e. not my testimony, yet believe the works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* In me, not as he was in the Prophets, and those that us'd to surprize the world with miracles.

And it's plain, the *Jews* perceiv'd that he spoke of something more than a deriv'd help from the Father, for that they would never have denied him. *They knew he was a teacher come from God; for no man could do the works that he did, except God was with him.* But they took his words to signify an equality with God; and therefore after all the explications he gave of 'em, it is observ'd *They sought again to take him.* And this was the only provocation, as it had been before: *They sought the more to kill him, because he said that God was his Father, making himself equal with God: And this they plead*

S E R M.
XIII.
~

Ver. 37.

Ver. 38.

Ver. 39.

John v. 18.

ed

SERMON. ed afterwards, *We have a law, and by that law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

XIII.

—xix. 7.

John xiv.

1.

—2, 3.

It is thus that he speaks to his own Disciples, *Ye believe in God, believe also in me, with an equal faith, the same in kind and in degree: I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again, and receive you to myself.* The fitting up a happiness for us, and taking us into it, were never understood to be any other than the works of a God: *Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and receive me to thy glory; whom have I in heaven but Thee?* And on purpose to establish them in this opinion, he adds, a little while afterward, *No man comes unto the Father, but by me;* but to let 'em see that he who brings 'em to the Father is equal to the Father, he delivers himself in such words as must either bear this sense, or we shall charge him with quibbling, *If ye had known me, you should have known my Father also, henceforth ye have known him, and seen him.* They did not understand it of seeing him in his works, but take it for a personal discovery which they imagin'd had never been given: Therefore saith Philip, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.* Jesus saith to him, *have I been so long time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip?* Yes, he knew him; but what's that to the purpose? Well, *He that has seen me, has seen the Father.* Certainly, in another sense than we may be said to see him in the wonders that his servants have wrought: The reason he repeats is, *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father who is in me does the works.*

—10.



SERMON XIV. OG. 12. 1718.

III.  E are now to consider that particular MANIFESTATION of God which the text has led us to, and this is said to be IN THE FLESH. Religion is nothing else but the discovery that God has made of himself, a revelation that's given out from him. Take religion as a doctrine, and it is this revelation expos'd ; take it as a principle, and it is this revelation implanted, filling the mind, possessing the will, Gal. i. 16. and moving the affections ; take it as a practice, and it is this revelation drawn out and return'd in duty and love. 'Tis life eternal to know the only true God. John xvii. 3. The ways that he has taken to open out himself, and be known to the world, are very different. He has at sundry times, and in divers manners, spoke in times past to our Fathers by the Prophets, Heb. i. 1. and in these last days has spoken to us by his Son. I will just mention the most remarkable of 'em as an introduction to the happy disclosure that you have in my text : and in these you will see, how the revelation of a God has been as the light of the morning, shining more and more, till it came to a perfect day.

1. He has manifested himself in voices : He us'd to speak out to the world. Adam and his wife Gen. iii. 8. heard the voice of the Lord God in the midst of the garden : Thus he dealt both with good and bad. You

S E R M. You find him arguing with *Cain*, as well as *testifying to the gifts of Abel*. This way expir'd by degrees: And, then

Heb. xi. 4.

Job xxxiii.

15, 16.

2. He manifested himself by *dreams and visions of the night, when deep sleep falls upon men, and slumbrings upon the bed*: Then he opens the ears of men, and seals their instruction. This was also without any distinction betwixt his people and his enemies. Thus he came to *Abimelech* in a dream by night. In

Gen. xx. 3. like manner he met *Laban the Syrian*, and convey'd into his heart an awful charge, not to speak to *Jacob* either good or bad: He rebuk'd him in the night.

Ver. 42.

Dan. xi.

28.

Thus he instructed *Pharaoh*, and terrify'd *Nebuchadnezzar*. For there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and makes known what shall be in the latter Days.

3. He us'd to manifest himself by raising up eminent persons, either as *Prophets* to teach his people, or as *Saviours* to defend 'em. The revelation was then contracted, not given to mankind in general, but made known to those whom he had chosen. He took this way to bring the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, by appointing *Moses* to be the shepherd of his flock, and putting his Spirit within him.

Isa. lxiii. 2.

And as it was the encouragement that he gave to *Moses* himself, *I have known thee by name, and thou hast found grace in my sight*; so he brings it in for his vindication against the envy of *Aaron* and *Miriam*. If there be a Prophet among you, I will make

Num. xii.

6, 7, 8.

myself known to him in a vision, and speak to him in a dream: My servant *Moses* is not so, who is faithful in all my house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold; wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant *Moses*? From hence you see, that what had been the general experience of mankind, came to be more restrain'd. It belong'd to an office, and was not

was not given in common as it us'd to be. SER M. XIV. therefore it is observ'd, that *there arose not a Prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face.* Of old time, holy men of God spake as they were mov'd by the Holy Ghost.

4. He manifested himself in miracles. This was for the conviction of the world. As *Moses saith, Hereby ye shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done 'em of my own mind.* He suspected the incredulity of the people before he took his commission, *They will not believe my voice, for they will say, the Lord has not appear'd unto thee.* And therefore God order'd him to cast down his rod, which became a serpent, and do it a second time, which restor'd it into a rod, *That they may believe that the Lord God of their Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob has appear'd unto thee.* And it is observ'd, that when *Aaron* spake the words to the people, *Moses* did the signs in their sight, *And the people believ'd, and bow'd down their heads and worshipp'd.* Thus he shew'd his people the power of his works, that he might give 'em the heritage of the heathen.

5. He manifested himself, in a written law. One part of it was writ with the finger of God upon two tables of stone, but these were broke, when the people for whom they were design'd had wander'd into a superstition of their own. After that, *Moses* commanded them a law, even the inheritance of the congregation of *Jacob*. This he did according to the pattern shew'd him in the mount, for he was faithful in all things to him who had appointed him. Thus the prophets, whom he rais'd up afterwards, were directed and fill'd; that which they regarded was the Spirit of Christ that was in 'em, and the testimony that this gave to our salvation. 1 Pet. i. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 16. All Scripture was given by inspiration of God.

S E R M. 6. He manifested himself by several ordinances.

XIV. He gave 'em statutes and judgments by which they were to live. He was *known in their palaces for a refuge*. They went up to the place that he had
 Psal. xlviii. 3. chosen, to the testimony of Israel.
 cxvii. 4.

7. He also manifested himself by appearing frequently to 'em. *The Angel of his presence sav'd 'em*.
 Isa. lxiii. 9.

And this he did at any remarkable turn of life, when the concerns of his glory and their happiness made it needful. Thus we read, that the *Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham*.
 Gen. xviii. 31.

xlviii. 3. *Jacob takes notice that God Almighty appear'd to him at Luz, in the land of Canaan*: This was at a time that might be call'd the dead of night, the gloomy part of life, when he left his Father's house, because of his brother's anger. After this, upon his

return, *He had power over the Angel, and prevail'd: He found him in Bethel*. So again, when the famine had starv'd him out of *Canaan*, the country that was promis'd to him and his seed after him; at

Beer Sheba, the confines of the land, *God spake to Israel in the visions of the night*: He sent an Angel to fetch 'em out of *Egypt*: He guided 'em in the way, and was an adversary to their adversaries. This

Prov. viii. 21. was no other than *He, who rejoic'd in the habitable parts of the earth*, and by that gave out some sketches of the future incarnation: It was the dawn

Mal. iii. 1. of our more glorious day. This *Angel of the covenant whom they delighted in*, was in the last days to come to his temple, and therefore discover'd himself

Acts xxvi. 7. to 'em before-hand, that *the twelve Tribes, instantly serving God day and night*, might still keep looking on, to the great hope of Israel.

8. The last and greatest manifestation that we have of God is *in the flesh*. What that body was by which he became visible, and made his appearance so often in the Old Testament, is a thing undescrib'd; and therefore to guess at it, is only to wander

der in the mazes of our own folly. It's certain, S E R. M. XIV. this way of coming in the flesh exceeds all the rest; it answers nobler ends, is better for us, and kinder in him. *These sundry times and divers manners* in which he spake to the Fathers, make so many glorious parts in history; but his speaking to us in these last days *by his Son*, is distinguish'd from all that went before. The way of doing *That* was more suitable to our happiness and his own dignity, upon several accounts. 'Tis more familiar, and less frightful; more certain and convincing; more expressive of our union to him; more capable of working out the great atonement; more instructive in the matter of duty; it gives a greater assurance of our happiness; and in the whole, is a nobler argument of the Divine love.

1. His being manifest in the flesh exceeds all the other manifestations that he gave of himself, as it is more familiar. *Rejoice greatly*, saith the Prophet, Zech. ix. 9. *O daughter of Sion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King comes unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass.* Whatever we may think of voices and thunders, and a doctrine discharg'd in the artillery of heaven, the people who were under that dispensation did not like it. At the giving of the law the Angels attended in their places, and were distributed into their several offices: some manag'd the thunder, others shook the mountain; some gave the smoke, and others the voice. Now, tho' these were a noble testimony to the law itself, and an argument for the people to hear and fear, yet the terror it put 'em into was by no means desirable. They come to *Moses*, and beg that he would go into the mount, that they might hear no more of these mighty thundrings. Nay, so dreadful was the sight, that *Moses himself said, I exceedingly fear and quake.* Heb. xii. 21, 22. And if he could not bear it, who had seen the Lord,

S E R M. and was prepar'd for a correspondence with all that
 XIV. glory, well might it scatter a confusion among
 the children of Israel.

Thus was God manifest then, and they might
 take it for a *humbling of himself*, to behold the
 things that were done among 'em; but we have
 his love in a more familiar way, in that he would
 Gal. iv. 4. *send forth his Son made of a woman, and made under*
 Joh. i. 14. *the law. The word was made flesh and dwelt among*
 Heb. xii. *us. We are not come to the mount that burn'd with*
 18, 19. *fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and*
the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which
they that heard entreated that the word should no more
 ver. 24, *be spoken to 'em, but to Jesus the mediator of the*
 26. *new covenant, whose voice then shook the earth.*

And if it was not a God who came into that ta-
 bernacle of flesh, and took our nature into union
 with himself, we cannot regard it with so much
 veneration as we must have done those thunders
 and voices that publish'd the *Horeb* edition of the
 law. He was certainly at mount *Sinai* among his
 Pf. lxxviii. *thousands of Angels*, and is it not the same God who
 17. took upon him our nature? if not, we are no gain-
 ers by this dispensation. What was there in Him
 more than a Prophet? His working greater mira-
 cles, giving a better account of religion, is not all,
 for that any other person might have done: nay,
 in each of these his own Disciples exceeded him,
 Joh. xiv. as he foretold they should: *He that believes on me*
 12. *shall do greater things than I do, because I go to my*
Father. From them the world has a more complete
 edition of the Gospel than they had from him: He
 left many things unsaid, but the Spirit whom he
 xvi. 13. would send should *lead them into all truth.* And
 therefore, what was there in him, more than in
 them? you can put it upon no less than the great-
 Acts vii. *ness of his Person.* The law was given *by the dis-*
 53. *position of Angels, being ordain'd by Angels in the*
 Gal. iii. 19. *hands*

hands of a Mediator, that is, *Moses*. Our Gospels ^{E R M.}
comes with none of this solemnity, but with quiet ^{XIV.}
preaching, *the voice of one crying in the wilderness,* ^{Luke iii.}
prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths ^{4.}
strait. Thus it begun with the ministry of *John*
the Baptist, or rather, that was preliminary to it;
for *this great salvation began to be spoke by the Lord* ^{Heb. ii. 2,}
Jesus, and was confirm'd by those that heard him. ^{3.}

Now, where was the force of the Apostle's argument, if *the word spoken by Angels was steadfast,* and every transgression and disobedience receiv'd a recompense of reward; how shall we escape who neglect the great salvation that began to be spoke by the Lord *Jesus*? It's apparent, he considers *Jesus* as a much greater speaker than the Angels: and it is certain nothing of that could be seen in his conversation, for he was much *lower than the Angels*. They who believ'd not were far from taking him for one above 'em, or giving the preference to his words more than to what was said by an Angel: so that, if there is any conclusion at all in his argument, it must be drawn from an *unseen glory* in the speaker, something that was not known to them that despis'd him, and only evident to those whose eyes God had open'd; and so it prov'd: *He was in the* ^{Joh. i. 10.}
world, and the world was made by him, but the world
knew him not, i. e. they knew him not as their
Maker. In other respects they were no strangers to him: they knew him to be of *Nazareth*, of a poor parentage, of a mean kindred, but they knew him not in his main character. Our Saviour observes both these, for his enemies argu'd, *We know this man whence he is; but when Christ comes, no man knows whence he is;* to which he answers, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am; but he that sent* ^{Joh. vii.}
me is true, whom ye know not; but I know him, for ^{27, 28,}
I am from him. He came to his own, and his own ^{29.}
receiv'd him not, i. e. the Jews. They marvell'd

S E R M. at his words, were astonish'd at his doctrine; they
 XIV. admir'd his miracles; but this was not receiving
 him: that contain'd a great deal more than believ-
 ing him to be a good man, a Prophet mighty in
 word and deed. Now, *to them that receiv'd him, he*
gave power to become the Sons of God, even to them that
believe, on what? on his name, tho' their faith might
be led on by his doctrine, and by his miracles; [ne-
ver man spake like this man; he did the works
that no other could do] yet it fix'd on his unseen
 character.

They believ'd *on his name*, what he was in him-
 Joh. i. 13, self. And what is that? *The word was made flesh,*
 14. *and dwelt among us.* Others might know that as
 well as they, they saw him to be flesh, and they
 knew his abode, but they were ignorant of the an-
 tecedent majesty; and therefore those believers were
 ennobled to look thro': *We beheld his glory (the glo-*
ry of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and
truth. Those last words belong to the first, and
 may be consider'd apart from the parenthesis that
 breaks the sentence. He tells us that this word
dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. The cha-
 racter fixes upon him as Mediator: with that fur-
 niture he was an inhabitant in our world; but this
 does not tell us *all* that he was: there's something
 else that believers saw in him, besides the holiness
 of his Person, and the qualifications for his work:
 they saw *HIS glory*, and what was this? *the glory*
of the only begotten of the Father: the world had ne-
 ver before such a discovery of a God. God had
 often been *with* a person, but not *in* one, and there-
 fore he is call'd *the image of the invisible God*; the
 most familiar manifestation that the world can have
 Heb. i. 2. of him. He is *the brightness of his Father's glory,*
and the express image or character of his Person.
 Upon which he saith to Philip, *He that has seen*
me, has seen the Father.

How

How familiar was this, that he should be *Imma-* S E R M.
nuel, God with us ! not merely by a spiritual pre- XIV.
 sence, for that he *was before*, and that he *is* more
 eminently *now*, but he who was with us is God :
 this way was the most agreeable to our weakness.
 God's appearance us'd to be dreadful : *Jacob* makes
 a wonder of it, *I have seen God face to face, and yet* Gen. xxxii.
my life is preserv'd. *Manoah* as soon as he saw the 30.
 Angel of the Lord (which shews what sort of an
 Angel he took him for) cries out with all the
 pain of admiration, *We shall surely die, because we*
have seen God. The manifestation that he makes
 of himself in the flesh, is without all this dread :
 here *our eyes may see, and our hands may handle of* Joh. i.
the word of life, as that Apostle saith who us'd to 1, 2.
 lie in his bosom : *For, saith he, the life was mani-*
fested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew
unto you that eternal life which was with the Father,
and was manifested unto us. What he calls *the word*
of life in one verse, he calls by the name of *life* it-
 self in the other, which shews that they both must
 be understood of a person ; of Him, whom they
 had look'd upon, and whom their hands had hand-
 led. This eternal life was *with the Father*, as the
 author of eternal life, and yet he was *manifest to*
us in the flesh : He came into one of our taberna-
 cles, those houses of clay whose foundations are in
 the dust, and are crush'd before the moth.

2. This manifestation of God is most certain
 and convincing. Many times they could not tell
 whether it was God who spake to 'em or no. The
 Prophets themselves were frequently oblig'd to take
 up with the after-grounds of assurance, *Then I knew* Jer. xxxii.
it was the word of the Lord. *Elijah* saw a mighty 8.
 earthquake, but *the Lord was not in the earthquake* : Zech. xi.
 he heard a strong rushing wind, but *the Lord was* 11.
not in the wind : he expected to have found him 1 Kings
 in both these ; but we are sure that the Lord God xix. 4

SER M. of Israel has visited and redeem'd his people, *ἐπιχαρί-
XIV. ἔτατο καὶ ἐποίησε λύτρωσιν*, He has look'd upon 'em,
and wrought out a salvation.

Luke i.
68.

What sort of a body he had for the apparitions under the old Testament, we cannot tell; but now he is *made of a woman*. He did not take upon him a shadow, an airy covering, a humane figure, which he might throw off as a looser garment, after it had serv'd a particular occasion: but *he was*
Heb. iv. 15. *in all things tempted as we are, κατὰ πάντα καὶ ὁμοιότητα*, according to the whole of that likeness
ii. 14, 17. that he had to his people. *Forasmuch as children were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself καθ' ὅλην ἁπλῶς* universally, entirely, was a sharer with 'em; for it became him in all things to be made like unto his brethren.

The primitive churches were guilty of an error upon this head, against which the Apostles argu'd with a particular vehemence: his divinity was not then the main question, so much as the truth of his humanity. That he who came about their salvation is *the mighty God* was easily believ'd, because it is only under those notions that we conceive him equal to the design. But the difficulty lay in this, that an infinite nature should take a finite one, that he should be *a child*, live as we did, and die as we shall: this was the great stumbling-block; and therefore he is call'd *an Antichrist who denied that Christ was come in THE FLESH*. Not but that they would own that he had been among 'em, there were witnesses enough of that; but they thought he could not have the reality and truth of our nature; in opposition to which those expressions were us'd, *We have look'd upon, and our hands have handled the Word of life*. There's no handling of a God, or seeing him, who *dwells in that light to which none can approach*. As the Word of life, he could not be the subject of such a conversation;

versation; but the meaning is, that He who bore S E R M.
this Divine character came down into a lower, and XIV.
so dwelt among us.

This is not like those transient visions under the old Testament. When the Angel came the second time upon *Manoah's* prayer, and had given him instructions what he should do to the child, and at last went up in the flame, it is said that *the Angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and his wife.* He had done with that message. These *hasty revelations*, that were carried on in a way of *flight*, left the people at great uncertainties; but now it is observ'd of the Lord Jesus, that *he went* Acts i. 21.
in and out amongst us.

They might well say, *We believe, and are SURE,* Joh. vi.
that thou art that Christ the Son of the living God. 69.
And to this profession our Lord himself gives his testimony, *I have given unto them the words that* xvii. 8.
thou gavest me, and they have receiv'd them, and have known SURELY that I came out from thee, and they have believ'd that thou hast sent me. Indeed this is what themselves had told him a little before, *Now we are SURE that thou knowest all things, and* xvi. 30.
needest not that any man should ask of thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God. In what sense? as a good man, as a mighty Prophet? no, but as one that had an existence with God, and the existence of a God, as one that *knew all things.* Now, why should they say that of him, when he had expressly told 'em, that there was an hour that none of the Angels knew, no not the Son, but the Father? He plainly confesses a nature that was *not* omniscient, and therefore if they did not believe he had *another* that *was*, they would never have been so loose and extravagant in their zeal as to tell him, that *he knew all things.*

3. This manifestation in the flesh, is most expressive of our union to him. We may call him

our

SER M. *our God*, as he is the author of *salvation*, and as he gives us the desires that are breathing after it, and all the preparations that relate unto it; but that he might abundantly shew us *how much* he is ours, he is *bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh*: he becomes *the seed of the woman*. It was not enough that he all along design'd to condemn sin, but he does it *in the flesh*; so that by this means, he has all the names that signifie the dearest relations. He is *our Lord and master*; we call him so, and we say well. We are *under the law to Christ*. He's our friend, our shepherd, he lays down his life for the sheep. He is our Father. *His goings forth have been of old from everlasting*. Here am I, saith he, *and the children whom he has given me*. But on purpose to shew us this union in all the happy forms that can be, he becomes also our brother, *the first-born among many brethren*. As the ground of an union with him in covenant, he admits us to one in nature. He did this on purpose to be the foundation of our hope in that promise, *I in them, and thou in me*. He became the Son of man, that we might be the children of God.

4. This manifestation in the flesh, was for the working out of a great atonement. The Apostle gives that as the reason, why it *behov'd him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest in things pertaining to God, making reconciliation for the sins of the people*. This us'd to be carried on in a way that could have no other value, than as it was typical of something better than itself; I mean, by sacrifices and burnt-offerings: for tho' he told us, *that without shedding of blood there could be no remission*, yet it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Now in order to answer what *this* could only point to, there must be an incarnation. Satisfac-

on was the το ἀδύνατον τῷ ὁσιν, the thing that the law could not do, and this God brings about by sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. Sending him in those slihter and thinner forms under the old Testament would be sufficient for an instruction to his people, and for a rescue from their enemies. This would do for a captain of the Lord's host, as he calls himself to Joshua, but it could not avail to a propitiation; there must be the shedding of blood for that: and therefore, saith he, when sacrifice and offering thou wouldst have no longer, a body thou hast prepar'd me. That opinion of the ancients, which the Apostle John run down with so much warmth, that Christ was not come in the flesh, ought to be resisted in all the vehemence that he us'd, because it destroy'd the foundations. If he was not man, he could not die, and if he did not die, there was no atonement made, we are yet in our sins. If there was none of this precious blood, we are still unredeem'd: and tho' he is the lion of the tribe of Judah, he is not that Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

S E R M.
XIV.Rom. viii.
4.

Josh. v. 25.

Heb. x. 8.

Joh. i. 29.

5. By this manifestation in the flesh, he gave the best instructions in the matter of our duty. Had he never reveal'd himself otherwise than in the more glorious forms that were us'd of old, we should have admir'd his Person, but not understood so much of his errand: he was therefore to teach us after the manner of men, to bear the weakness and prejudice of his Disciples, and to answer their objections. Job complain'd that every admonition from God lost its usefulness by its majesty, and therefore thinks he could have learnt better, if the terror of the Lord had not made him afraid. Let not his fear terrifie me, then would I speak, and not fear him, but it is not so with me: I am troubled at his presence, when I consider I am afraid of him; for God makes my heart soft, and the Almighty

Job xxiii.
15, 16.

S E R M. *Almighty troubles me: and therefore, Elihu tells*
 XIV. *him, Behold, I am according to thy wish, in God's*
 xxxiii. *stead: I am form'd out of the clay: behold, my terror*
 6, 7. *shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be*
heavy upon thee.

This expression of his shews us what sort of a dispensation would be best, where we could have God's wisdom deliver'd without his majesty, as Col. ii. 9. *we have from one in whom dwells all the fulness of*
 Job xix. *the Godhead bodily. Job knew that his Redeemer*
 25. *should stand in the latter days upon the earth: he shall*
 Mic. v. 4. *stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, and in the*
 5. *majesty of the name of the Lord his God. The man*
that is to be the peace shall do this: he was to feed
 Isa. xl. 11. *his flock like a shepherd, carry the lambs in his arm, take*
'em in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with
young. The manifestation of a God in the flesh, gives the easiest conveyance to all instructions. When he reveal'd himself in that cloud of thick darkness by which he took possession of Solomon's temple, the priests could not enter in to minister because of the stifling glory. Tho' they admir'd so great a token of the Divine presence, yet it rather kept 'em out of his service than help'd 'em in it: but when God came down among us in the person of a Redeemer, religion was both greater to
 Joh. xvii. *our minds, and sooner in 'em. I manifested unto*
 6, 8. *them thy name, and I have given unto them the words*
that thou gavest me, and they have receiv'd 'em.

6. This gives us the greatest assurance of our happiness, because he has carried his body up with him to heaven: *thither Jesus our forerunner is for*
 Heb. vi. *us enter'd.* When, and how did he enter? In the
 20. *day of his crucifixion? for that day he was*
with the converted thief in paradise; or as one that
took possession for himself? no, but as a high Priest
for ever, with all the materials of a sacrifice about
 ix. 12. *him: By his own blood he enter'd into the holiest of*
 all,

all, having obtain'd eternal redemption for us. We ^{SER M.} therefore the rather look for Christ Jesus the Lord, ^{XV.} and know that he will *change our vile bodies*, because he has now such a *glorious body*, and is able ^{Phil. iii. 21.} by a mighty power to *subdue all things unto himself*.

7. This shews the goodness of God our Saviour towards men. Herein has God commended his love ^{Joh. iii. 16.} towards us, in sending his only begotten Son into the world, that *whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life*. This might well be call'd glad tydings of great joy to all people, that to us is ^{Luke ii. 11.} born in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord. Let the redeem'd of the Lord say so, let 'em take a part in the songs of those Angels who brought the message, and say, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men*. ^{ver. 14.}



SERMON XV.

Oct. 26.
1718.

IV.  HE last thing I'm to do, according to the disposition that we have made of the words, is to shew you how this branch of the christian religion answers the noble character that's here given of it, as a *mystery of godliness*. Under this head there are two parts,

1st, That it is a mystery, and,

2^{dly}, That it is a mystery of *godliness*.

I have already consider'd each of these, as they belong to the Gospel in general, and let you see the importance of mysteries in our religion, that they are a suitable object of faith, and indeed the glory of any revelation. *Our hearts are comforted* ^{Col. ii. 2.}

S E R M in the riches of the full assurance of understanding, and an
XV. acknowledgment of the mystery. You have also heard

how well christianity is prepar'd upon this account to form the minds of men, to direct their choice, to help on their duty, and ensure their happiness; and that without a belief of some things, that reason can neither discover nor comprehend, it is impossible that practical holiness should obtain in the
Tim. vi. world: 'tis a doctrine according to godliness. I shall

3. now lay before you those divine titles as they belong to this particular article of faith, that God ~~was~~ manifest in the flesh, and let you see both that it is a mystery, and that it is design'd to promote our duty and consolation.

I. I begin with the first of these, that it is a MYSTERY; and really there's no need to dispute it. The text is literally true, that *without controversy great is this mystery*. This is so far from being a part of the question, that it is therefore denied to be a *truth*, because it is a *mystery*. All the objections form'd against it are upon this ground, do but bring it down to the management of reason, let it be one of those things that man's wisdom teaches, and we shall have no contradiction of sinners. But as it is among *the deep things of God*, which none but the holy Ghost reveals, 'tis upon
Cor. ii. this account that *the natural man receives it not*,
14. neither can he know it, because it is foolishness to him.

However, I will lead you thro' a few particulars that will shew how amazing this contrivance deserves to be in the eyes of all the Saints. If God was manifest in the flesh, then the following oppositions between the two natures were reconcil'd. And how could men or Angels either imagine the way, or believe the fact, if an all-comprehending wisdom had not both contriv'd and reveal'd it? He that dwells in a light to which none can approach, becomes

becomes *visible* to the world. He who had pre-^{S E R M.}
par'd his throne in the heavens lives among men, ^{XV.}
He who is above the derivation of any being from
a man is made of a woman. He who is Lord of
all, takes the form of a servant. He who is eter-
nally *holy*, appears in the likeness of *sinful* flesh.
He whose *kingdom* rules over all, is a man of *for-*
rows, and acquainted with grief! He who is *blest*'d
for ever, becomes a *curse* for us: and he who is
the Prince of *life* is obedient to the *death* of the
cross.

These several wonders are contain'd in the ma-
nifestation that God made of himself in the flesh:
and they are all of that nature, that as our reason
is never able to find 'em out, so neither ought it
ever to have taken 'em in, if they had not been
recommended by a divine testimony. They are
every one of 'em incredible, and to us they appear
impossible. As none but a God could do 'em,
so none but a God can tell 'em. It's upon his
report alone that we receiv'd 'em.

I. Is it not a mystery that He *who dwells in*
that light to which none can approach, became visible
to us? The former part of this character belongs
to Christ, as you will see by the context to the
verse out of which I have taken it. The Apostle
charges Timothy to keep the commandment without spot, ^{1 Tim. vi:}
and unrebukeable unto the appearing of our Lord Jesus ^{15, 16.}
Christ, WHO in his times shall shew who is the blessed
and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of
Lords. There's nothing said of him thus far, but
what agrees to the known language of the Bible.
And he goes on in a description of the very same
Person, that He only has immortality, dwelling in the
light which none can approach unto, whom no man has
seen, nor can see; to whom be glory and power ever-
lasting, Amen. 'Tis under this notion that our
Lord speaks of the Divine Nature, as that which is
known

S E R M. known and seen by none but himself. *No man had*
 XV. *seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in*
 John i. 10. *the bosom of the Father, he has declar'd him. And*
 vi. 46. *again, not that any man has seen the Father, save he*
that is of God, he has seen the Father. The same in-
 Mat. xi. *accessible glory does he challenge to himself, that*
 27. *none knows the Father but the Son, and none knows the*
Son but the Father.

Now, he was to make the Divine Nature, in some respects, conversible with us. Hence we read of
 2 Cor. iv. him, that *he is the image of God.* This description
 4. is elsewhere more enlarg'd, that he is *the image of*
 Col. i. 15. *the invisible God, the first-born of every creature.* Thus
 the Apostle saith in that text that will ever contain
 a fulness of truth, when all the pains that men take
 Heb. i. 2. to rob and plunder it shall prove in vain, *He is the*
brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image
 2 Cor. iv. *of his person.* We have the light of the knowledge of
 6. *the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ.* This
 was the design of his incarnation, that God and
 man should again be known to one another. *Moses*
 Ex. xxxiii. *begs of God, I beseech thee shew me thy glory ; and*
 18. *receives this for an answer, Thou canst not see my*
 Vcr. 20. *face ; for no man shall see me and live.* How differ-
 ent is the answer that our Lord gives to Philip,
 John xiv. who had desir'd the same thing, *Shew us the Father,*
 8. *and it sufficeth us ?* Christ does not tell him as it
 was said to *Moses*, that he is asking for a thing im-
 possible. No, he represents his own person, as a
 more familiar publication of the Divine Nature than
 —9, 10. the world ever had before. *If ye had known me, ye*
should have known my Father, and from henceforth ye
have known him, and seen him : He that has seen me
has seen the Father ; and how say'st thou then, shew us
the Father ? Believest thou not, that I am in the Fa-
ther, and the Father in me ? Who would ever ima-
 1 John i. *gine, that we should see, and with eyes look upon, and*
 1, 2. *that our hands should handle the Word of life ! For the*
life

God manifest in the Flesh.

209

life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and shew unto you, that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifest to us. S E R M.
XV.

Moses tells the children of Israel, that there was something in their case which exceeded all the observation of the universe. *Ask now of the days that are past which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon earth, and ask from one side of heaven unto the other, whether there has been any such thing as this great thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard and live?* This he repeats to their farther astonishment, the Lord talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midst of the fire: And he puts 'em in mind of the remark that themselves made upon this occasion; *Ye said, behold the Lord our God has shew'd us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the Fire; we have seen this day that God does talk with man, and he lives.* But all this does not amount to so much as an incarnation; that the word should be made flesh. It was Christ who reveal'd himself to the Jews of old; He was the Angel of the Divine Presence; 'twas the reproach of Christ which Moses esteem'd above all the treasures of Egypt. 'Twas he who appear'd at Horeb in a flame of fire out of the midst of the bush; but then he was not to be approach'd to: The Lord called unto Moses, *Draw not nigh hither, but put off thy shoes from thy feet.* As the Angel that went before 'em, he plac'd himself within a cloud, from which they were to keep their distance: But when the word was made flesh, they beheld his glory. And what a wonder is it, that He who would not be known any otherwise than in these imperfect revelations, should be manifest in the flesh? Deut. iv. 32, 33.
Ch. v. 4.
Ver. 24.
Heb. xi. 26.
Exod. iii. 5.
John i. 13.

2. Another thing mysterious in this doctrine is, that He who has prepar'd his throne in the heavens

P

should

- SER M. should dwell among men. The Word was made
 XV. flesh, *καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν*, and had a tabernacle among us; he was not only our brother, but our neighbour, *rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth*. To prepare a throne in the heavens is the glory of a God: 'Tis one of the highest conceptions we have of him; *That the heaven, even the heaven of heavens is the Lord's*. Our Saviour takes care to represent it as His place. Thus, when he speaks of the Father before the foundation of the world, he saith of himself, *I was with him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him*. And as the Evangelist tells us, *The Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God*: He had his own seat of government and glory. This he demands upon his return, *Glorify me with the glory that I had with Thee, before the world was*. The Son of man ascended where he was before. This is what he could never lose, and therefore speaks of his presence and greatness there as a continued thing, an eternal enjoyment; and if it is not to be understood of a nature above what he appear'd in, we know not how to make sense of the words: *No man has ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven*: His ascension in our nature was not till some years after this; but what he adds in the next words brings its own interpretation along with it, *The Son of man who is in heaven*. Was not this enough to confound *Nicodemus*? If it did not relate to his Divinity, the expression would puzzle us more than the account of the new birth puzzled him: For a person who was then with him in a little room to talk of being *in heaven*, might provoke him to say a second time, how can these things be?
- Now, what a wonder is it, that he who liv'd in the high and holy place that is call'd eternity, should come in and go out among us! He might have taken our
- Psal. cxv. 16.
 Prov. viii. 30.
 John i. 1.
 2.
 xvii. 2.
 vi. 62.
 John iii. 13.
 Isa. lvii. 15.
 Acts i. 21.

God manifest in the Flesh.

211

our nature in the same way that now keeps it, placed it at once in the city and temple of God, never let it come lower than it is at present. He might have made it from the beginning, as it now is, *a glorious Body*. But the astonishment is that he should be *in the world* that was *made* by him.

S E R M.
XV.

Phil. iii.

21.
John i. 10.

The Scripture has told us with what amazement the most eminent persons of two religions have deliver'd themselves upon this doctrine. The heathen could never believe it, and therefore lay it down as a principle when they speak of their gods, that *their dwelling is not with flesh*. And the Jews themselves, to whom it was so often promis'd, found it hard to be conceiv'd. Solomon had a Divine direction to build a temple, and about this he had us'd all the pains, and cost, and care that the world was capable of supplying: And yet when he comes to the solemnity of a dedication, he can scarce believe what he ought not to doubt of: He flies back with a recoil of wonder, *Will God in very deed dwell on the earth! behold the heaven, even the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, how much less this house that I have built?*

Dan. ii. 2.

That which he found it so hard to apprehend becomes the report of our Gospel. This is the great voice that we have heard out of heaven, saying, *Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with 'em, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them, and be their God*. That Christ is made of the seed of David according to the flesh; nay, that he was born in the city of David, that there they should find a Child; well might the shepherd's say, *Come, and let us go to Bethlehem, and see this GREAT THING that is come to pass*.

Rev. xxi.

3.
Rom. i.

3.
Luke ii. 2.

Ver. 15.

3. Another part of the mystery is, that he who has deriv'd no being from a man should be born of a woman. The Apostle argues to the Athenians that *God needed not any thing, seeing that he gives to us*

Acts xvii.

life 25.

S E R M life and breath, and all things. And we have an equal account of Christ Jesus, that by him all things were fix'd, that he upholds all things by the word of his power; that in him was life, and that life was the light of men. So that, tho' he took upon him our nature, it was not in such a descent as we have. God speaks of it as his own act, the thing that he would distinguish to the wonder of all ages. Behold the Lord himself shall give you a sign, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel. This our Saviour mentions as a Divine contrivance; A body hast thou prepar'd me. And it is amazing that his title, as the Son of God, is given him upon this account as well as those that are greater. As the Angel tells the Virgin Mary, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; and therefore that holy thing that is born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

'Tis as hard for us to conceive how he should be a man, according to this account, as it is how he should be a God. This is as great a difficulty in the history of the Gospel, as there can be in its doctrines. And therefore when it is said, that to us a Son is born, to us a child is given; the names that he is called by are, Wonderful, Counsellor, everlasting Father, and mighty God. And he may be call'd Wonderful, considering the manner how he is born, and the way in which he is given. They that deny his Divinity may, with as much justice, do the same by his humanity, unless that expression comes within the reach of their reason, which I own will be ever astonishing to mine: Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise; whenas his mother was espoused to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. A phrase never us'd before, since the beginning of the world, and never like to be upon any other occasion. If we must have

God manifest in the Flesh.

213

no mysteries in religion, let us begin with razing S E R M
out this. If faith is to receive no more than wis- XV.
dom can explain, we may shut up the New Testa-
ment as soon as we have open'd it; for it will be
impossible to get over an incomprehensible fact that
lies in the very mouth of the story.

4. He who was *Lord of all* takes upon him the
form of a servant: This carries the wonder a little
deeper. The Apostle took care to let *Cornelius*
know this, and therefore wedges it in at the begin-
ning of his discourse: As soon as he had mention'd
peace by *Jesus Christ*, he adds, *He is Lord of all.* Acts x. 36.
This he was originally, *His kingdom rules over all.* Psal. ciii.
Thus the wise men enquir'd after him, *Where is He* 19.
that is born King of the Jews. So the Angel foretold, Mat. ii. 2.
He shall be great, and shall be call'd the Son of the Luke i. 32,
Highest, and the Lord God shall give him the throne 33.
of his Father David, and he shall reign over the house
of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be
no end. And, lest some people should think this
title (*the Son of the Highest*) is not ground enough
for our adoration, you read what *Zacharias*, the fa-
ther of *John* the Baptist, saith at the circumcision
of his Son: *Thou child shalt be call'd the Prophet of* Ver 76.
the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the
Lord to prepare his ways. The Angels are his Spi-
rits, and his ministers are a flame of fire; but to the
Son it is said, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever,* Heb. i. 7;
and a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy king- 8.
dom. It was reveal'd a long while ago, that he
should be the governour among the nations; that in Psal. xxii.
the days of those kings who were to dwell after one 28.
another in the world, *the God of heaven would set* Dan. ii.
up a kingdom that should not be destroy'd. He is call'd 44.
Messiah the Prince. —ix. 25.

But it was not *thus* that he took upon him our
nature; not with a dazzle or shew of this dignity,
but *being found in fashion as a man, he took upon him* Phil. ii. 7;
the 8.

SER M. *the form of a servant. He made himself of no repu-*
 XV. *tation, ἐκένωσεν ἑαυτόν, he made himself vain and*
 empty. He came with none of that fulness that
 we should have expected from the mighty things
 Isa. liii. 3. *that have been said of him. He grew up as a ten-*
 der plant, and a root out of a dry ground. He was
 Luke ii. *subject to his parents, wrought with them, and is*
 51. *therefore call'd the Carpenter. He was afterwards,*
 Mark vi. 3. *by way of scorn, a servant of rulers, one whom man*
 Isa. xlix. 7. *despis'd and nations abhor'd; nay, he was among his*
 own disciples as one that serves; the Son of man came
 Luke ix. *not to be minister'd unto, but to minister. He had not*
 58. *where to lay his head. The people minister'd to him*
 —viii. 3. *of their substance. Ye know the grace of our Lord*
 2 Cor. viii. *Jesus Christ, how, that tho' he was rich, yet, for your*
 9. *sakes, he became poor, that ye, thro' his poverty, might*
be made rich.

5. He who was eternally holy came in the
 Rom. viii. *likeness of sinful flesh. The devils gave him this*
 3. *testimony, I know thee who thou art, the holy one of*
 God. Thus the Father bare witness of him, *This*
 Mat. iii. *is my beloved Son, in whom I am always well pleased.*
 17. He had no part in the defilement of our nature;
 Heb. iv. 15. *for tho' he was in all points tempted as we are, yet*
 sin is excepted. And therefore it is observ'd, that
 2 Cor. v. *he was made sin for us who knew no sin. He did*
 21. *no evil, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

And yet he must appear in the likeness, the re-
 semblance, of such a person as he was not; And not
 only be charg'd by God with the guilt of others,
 but suppos'd by men to have a guilt of his own.
 His enemies could say to the judge, *If he was not*
an evil doer, we would not have brought him to thee.
 The crimes that he was accus'd of were of the
 blackest nature. First, They were angry that he
 Mat. xxvii. *was a Prophet, in opposition to this they call'd him*
 63. *a deceiver. We know that God spake to Moses, as for*
 John ix. *this fellow we know not from whence he is. Secondly,*
 29. *They*

God manifest in the Flesh.

215

They would not own him as a priest: 'Twas brought S E R M.
 into his indictment that he said, *Destroy this temple,* XV.
and I will build it in three days. 'Twas still more
 provoking, *Thirdly*, that he made himself a King;
 which title they perverted with a downright fal-
 hood, saying, upon this score, that he forbid to
 give tribute to *Cesar*: And they push'd this with
 a confidence that shew'd 'em to be impenetrable: *If*
thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend; for Joh. xix.
whoever makes himself a king is an enemy to Cesar. 12.
 But, *Fourthly*, the heaviest accusation of all was
 charging him with blasphemy; for this they ston'd
 him, because that he being a man, made himself
 God; that he said, *God was his Father,* THEREBY
making himself equal with God.

Thus they understood the phrase, and he lets
 'em go on in their notion. Another exposition
 of the word would have been a plea for the per-
 son: and they insist upon it, *We have a law, and*
by that law he ought to die, because he call'd himself
the Son of God. Is not here a wonder, that the
 holy child Jesus should give way to all this re-
 proach, and *endure the contradiction of sinners against* Heb. xii:
himself! But thus it must be, otherwise how could 3.
 the Scriptures have been fulfill'd?

6. He whose kingdom rules over all, is a man
 of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: Angels admire Isa. liii. 3.
 him, and yet he is despis'd and rejected of men; they
 hid their faces from him; his own receiv'd him not. Joh. i. 11.
 And such an usage as this was needful, in order to
 his bearing our griefs, and carrying our sorrows,
 that the chastisement of our peace might be upon him, 1 Cor. ii.
 and by his stripes we might be healed. Had the prin- 8.
 ces of this world known him, they would not have
 crucify'd the Lord of glory. Instead of that, they
 would have kiss'd the Son lest he should be angry:
 Kings would have shut their mouths at him. The Isa. lii. 15.
 Jews

SER. M. *Jews* would have run to him, as the great hope
 XV. of their fathers, and *the glory of Israel*.

Luke ii.

32.

Acts iii.

13, 14.

But his lot was the reverse to these honours: they denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determin'd to let him go: They denied the holy and just one, and desir'd a murderer to be granted to 'em. His name was grown so scandalous among 'em, that he becomes the jest of the multitude, who a little before had admir'd his miracles, and attended his public entry into *Jerusalem*. They banter'd all his offices; his prophetic, by throwing a cloth over his face, and then striking him with scorn, *Prophecy, O Christ, who it is that smote thee*; His kingly office, by plating a crown of thorns, putting it on his head, and bowing the knee before him, nay, by inscribing in the capital letters of three languages upon his cross; *This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*; And his priestly office is so much their contempt, that they think it expedient that he should die for the people; not in the sense that he design'd, but only as a political Sacrifice. The very thieves that were crucified with him cast the same in his teeth: *He sav'd others, let him save himself*. Now, he had as much the disposal of his reputation, as he had of his life. As no man could

Joh. x. 18. take that away, but he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again, so he could as easily have broke his way thro' the cloud, and caused light to shine out of darkness. Instead of making himself of no reputation, he could have put on the other characters, as one fairer than the sons of men, the chiefest among ten thousands, altogether lovely, and the desire of all nations.

Pf. xlv. 3.
 Cant. v.
 10, 16.
 Hag. ii. 7.

Now and then he scatter'd a little of this glory among the rebellious, by which he took off the rugged surface that the priests had laid on. The soldiers went to take him, but instead of returning with

with him as their captive, they confess themselves S E R M.
 to be his : *Never man spake like this man.* As he XV.
 sat in a synagogue at Galilee, the eyes of the whole Joh. vii.
 assembly were fix'd upon him, *wondering at the gra-* 46.
cious words that proceeded out of his mouth. This ac- Luke iv.
 count does not suppose 'em converts, but only that 20, 22.
 their better passions were touch'd and set a boiling.
 His brethren were amaz'd, that when he had so
 much reputation within reach, he had so little in
 possession : *Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy* Joh. vii.
Disciples may see the works that thou dost : for there 3, 4.
is no man that does any thing in secret, and he him-
self seeks to be known openly : if thou do these things,
shew thyself to the world. But this project, instead
 of flowing from their faith, was an argument of
 their unbelief, as the historian tells us, for *neither*
did his brethren believe on him. And when he went
 up, *it was not openly, but as it were, in secret.* What
 a mystery is this, that he who could have com-
 manded the kingdoms of this world, and the glory
 of 'em, without bowing to Satan, should find *no*
faith in the earth ?

7. 'Tis another mystery, that He who is *blest'd*
 for ever, should become a *curse for his people.* These
 are each of 'em the language of Scripture, unim-
 prov'd and undisguis'd. The Apostle distin-
 guishes between the nature that he appear'd in, and
 that which was principal and antecedent. He saith,
that of the Jews, as concerning the flesh, Christ came ; Rom. ix.
 and therefore he must be consider'd some way or 5.
 other as abstracted from this flesh, as he is in him-
 self, and that is *God over all blessed for ever.* Of
 him we read, that he is *made under the law,* and
 what is that ? The same Apostle has laid down
 this maxim without any exception, *that as many as*
are under the law, are under the curse ; and thus Gal. iii.
Christ was made a curse for us. And lest you should 10, 13.
 have any doubt about this, he shews us, that he
 became

S E R M. became so in a ceremonial or a judicial sense, in the
 XV. language of that law that was peculiar to the *Jews*,
 among whom God had said, *Cursed is every one*
that hangs on a tree.

He who was daily God's delight, comes to be
 1sa. liii. 6, his abhorrence: *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of*
 20. *us all: it pleas'd the Father to bruise him, and put*
him to grief: not for any vileness in his person,
or any provocation in his behaviour, but he suffer'd
 1 Pet. iii. *the just, for the unjust, that he might bring us to God,*
 18. *For the transgression of my people he was stricken.*
 Rom. iii. God set him forth to be a propitiation for our sins thro'
 25. *faith in his blood: and what a mystery is this! that*
the chastisement of our peace should be upon him! The
 Joh. vi. *Jews cried out, How can this man give us his flesh*
 52. *to eat? 'Tis as strange that it should be a sacrifice,*
as that it should be an entertainment, and yet with-
out this there could be no remission. CHRIST was
offer'd to bear the sins of many: he has appear'd in
 Heb. ix. *these last days to put away sin by the sacrifice of him-*
 28. *self.*

You know, this is so much a mystery, that the
 rage which men direct against the divinity of our
 Lord, usually falls as heavy upon the satisfaction
 that he has made. As if people were resolv'd to go
 thro' the whole roll of those dreadful characters;
 x. 29. that as they have trodden under foot the Son of God,
i. e. in his Person; so they will count the blood of
the covenant an unholy or common thing, and do
despite to the Spirit of grace. But take away the Di-
 vinity of our Saviour, and we are left to seek in
 our reverence: take away his atonement, and we
 are struck off from our only hope. If he does
 not live for ever, we have no advocate: and if he
 did not die for us, we have no plea. It's from the
 cross, and the sacrifice upon it, that we fill our
 Job xxiii. *mouths with arguments. We have boldness to enter into*
 4. *the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and liv-*
 Heb. x. *ing*
 19, 20.

ing way that he has consecrated for us thro' the vail, S E R M. XVI.
that is to say, his flesh.

8. 'Tis another part of this mystery, that the Prince of life should be obedient to the death of the cross. Any other way of suffering had been more honourable; but it is mention'd as an extreme of duty, the farthest point to which it could go, that he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The Apostle does not forget this aggravation of his enemies malice, *The God of our fathers rais'd up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.* Hos. v. 30. And it is brought in as an evidence how powerful a joy was set before him, that he *endur'd the cross, and despis'd the shame.* Heb. xii. 2. And a shame it was in the language of their law, for, *he that is hang'd is accursed of God.* Dan. xxi. 23. Behold and wonder! might he not say as the church does, *See, O Lord, and consider, for I am become vile!* The Apostle, who had us'd it as an argument against the Jews, keeps to the same remark: *His own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* Pet. ii. 24. All these mysteries are comprehended in God's being manifest in the flesh.



SERMON XVI.

Nov. 9.
1718.

II.  HIS is a mystery of GODLINESS, and has a happy influence upon all practical religion. People are the better for believing it. Under this head I would desire your attention to the following particulars: That this doctrine is
3 a great

220 *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

S E R M. a great argument for our duty to God; it declares
 XVI. the value we have for his revelation; it is the chief
 ground of our hope; it is apparently the concern
 of good men; there are no practical inconveni-
 ences attending it; and all must own, it is a thing
 very desirable, and to be wish'd for.

1. This doctrine is a great argument of our duty
 to God. Tho' he pleads for worship from the
 title of Creator, *We bow down before the Lord our*
 6. *Maker, because we are the work of his hand, and the*
sheep of his pasture, yet the more moving persuasion
 1 Cor. vi. is, that *we are not our own, but bought with a price,*
 19. 20. *and therefore should glorifie God in our bodies and*
spirits, which are God's. The blood of Christ, who
 Heb. ix. thro' the eternal Spirit offer'd himself without spot to
 14. God, shall purge our conscience from dead works, to
 serve the living God. The dignity of that Person
 who was manifest in the flesh, gives a value to all
 Cant. i. 3. his commands: *His name is as ointment pour'd forth,*
 2 Cor. v. *and therefore do the upright love him.* This love of
 14. Christ constrains us, *συμμετρεῖσθαι*, we are drawn to
 it, and by it, as with a convulsive power.

The light of nature gives only a company of
 cold and heartless admonitions: it makes discove-
 ries, but it makes no impressions. But the grace
 of God, the doctrine that he has publish'd, and by
 Tit. ii. 11, which he is reveal'd as a God, teaches to deny un-
 12. godliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righte-
 ously, and godly in this present evil world. It has
 been indeed an old objection against Christianity,
 that by setting forth one to be a propitiation for
 our sins, it took off the care of men about their
 own duty. This is what the Papists reviv'd at the
 time of the reformation, that throwing away of
 merit was the impairing of religion: but that pre-
 tence had a sort of universal answer not only from
 the learning of ministers, but from the lives of
 people; their humility, their zeal, their abounding
 in

in the work of the Lord has roll'd away the re-^{S E R M.}
proach, and been a visible argument, that the doc-^{XVI.}
trine of free grace is a *doctrine of godliness*. 

2. The belief of God's being manifest in the flesh, is rais'd upon our value for the revelation he has given us: and denying it carries the most dangerous conclusion against the best dispensation that ever a people were under: *He that believes not the record that God has given of his Son, makes God a liar.* We take it for granted, that the most heavenly rules of worship are contain'd in the Bible: that this is *given by inspiration of God*, as he deliver'd it by those holy men *who were mov'd by the Holy Ghost*. ^{1 Joh. v. 20.}

Now, it's only upon the credit of this book, that we receive the things *that man's wisdom teaches not*. Had all the writings in the world told us, that the divine nature would unite itself with the humane, the imagination must have been wild and daring: 'tis a thing that we could not receive, but upon the witness of God himself: and the only reason upon which we own it is, because he has said it in whom there is no darkness at all. We speak wisdom among *them that are perfect; howbeit, not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world that come to nought: but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the wisdom which God ordain'd before the world unto our glory.* ^{1 Cor. ii. 13.}

We find by experience, that the denial of this doctrine does *eat as a canker: evil men and seducers wax worse and worse*. From doubting about one particular article, they go on to deny all mysteries in general: *The natural man receives not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know 'em.* The ground of doing this is the mighty opinion we have of humane reason, as if nothing should be admitted that does not bow to that. And it is impossible to indulge
that ^{2 Tim. iii. 13.}

S E R M. that notion without bearing very hard upon the
 XVI. revelation that God has given: for, if reason is the
 supreme judge, a revelation is needless; people may
 do without it. And thus revelation must be de-
 graded, and brought down to something beneath
 itself. If God at any time reveals himself, it must
 be about those matters that we could not otherwise
 have known: for if reason could have discover'd
 'em, there had been no need of this new light.

Now, if that is laid down beforehand, that we
 will receive nothing even from God himself, but
 what we can comprehend, it supercedes all the bu-
 siness and design of a revelation: 'tis declaring a-
 gainst it. If the doctrines of the Bible are to be
 valu'd by their consistence with the light of na-
 ture, they might all have been spar'd: the Holy
 Ghost had no need to raise up Prophets, and in-
 spire Apostles; because they tell us no more than
 what we either could have known without 'em, or
 if we could not, they are for that reason to be re-
 jected: and indeed this consequence that I am speak-
 ing of, is no more than what people make haste
 into. The very notion of a book from God runs
 low; and when once you've got into a contempt
 of that, farewell religion: for you must then con-
 clude, that God has given us no rules about the way
 of our approach to him, but that he continues to

Acts xiv. *suffer all nations to go on in their own ways.*

16.

If there is no revelation, there can be no me-
 thod of worship, but what every one's fancy leads
 him to; and if there's no worship, we shall live
 as without a God in the world. Thus do the
 principles of natural religion unravel, when men
 have wounded that which is reveal'd: they know

2 Tim. ii. not where to stop: *These profane and vain babblings*
 16. *increase unto more ungodliness.* Our faith in this
 doctrine, that God was manifest in the flesh, takes
 into it the whole scheme of duty. We believe it,

because

God manifest in the Flesh.

223

because it is the word of a God *who cannot lye*: S E R M.
XVI.
and in that we go upon this opinion, that he has
given us a perfect rule, a complete edition of his
mind and will, and has brought in *the better hope* Heb. vii.
19.
by which we now draw nigh unto him.

3. This doctrine is the chief ground of our
hope, and without that, I'm sure, there can be no
religion: *He that comes unto God, must believe that* Heb. xi. 6.
he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligent-
ly seek him. The devils, and they that dwell with
'em in the chains of darkness, know the former of
these: they believe there is one God: *they believe* Jam. ii. 19.
it, and tremble; but their eyes are shut from all
hope of an acceptance with him. They have no
expectation to please him with the gloomy homage
of that world: it's despair that keeps 'em silent
from his praise, and makes 'em rebellious in every
thought about him: but the *hope that is laid up* Col. i. 8.
for us in heaven brings forth fruit. *He that has this* 1 Joh. iii.
hope in him, purifies himself even as he is pure. That 3.
which makes us *stedfast, unmoveable, and always a-* 1 Cor. xv.
bounding in the work of the Lord, is because we know 38.
our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

Christianity sets our practice in another light
than any thing else can do. When a Heathen has
done his utmost, how can he tell whether God
will accept him or no? He must know, that the
best of his actions are no more than duty: they
make no atonement for sin. He sees God is just
in the retributions of his providence, and what
ground is there to suppose, he will not be so in
the world of spirits? And if that should happen,
where must a man of the brightest character ap-
pear? *In his sight shall no flesh living be justified.* Ps. cxliiii.
They knew that mere duty procur'd no pardon. a.
and therefore ran to sacrifices as their refuge. And
the more a man's conscience was awaken'd, the
greater barbarities did he use to make it easie, giv-
ing

224 *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

S E R M *ing his first-born for his transgression, the fruit of*
 XVI. *his body for the sin of his soul.* Christianity is the
 Mic. vi. 7. only religion that tells us what is become of our
 sins, that they are *laid on him who knew no sin.*
 Without this there could be *no hope*; and it is that
 which oyls the wheels, and makes us like the cha-
 Cant. vi. riors of a willing people.

12. 4. This doctrine is apparently the concern of
 good men, such as *work out their own salvation with*
fear and trembling. I don't speak now of the con-
 cern that the learned part of the world will main-
 tain, for the opinions they have read, study'd,
 and profess'd; but it is of more weight with me,
 what the humble christian saith, whose religion
 runs all into practice, who feels what he thinks,
 and does what he feels. When such a one comes
 to God by Jesus Christ, who is *the way of truth*
and the life, he uses to refresh his soul with this
 doctrine, that *the Mediator between God and man* is
 equal to both parties: that as he thought it no shame
 to be equal with man, he thought it *no robbery to*
 Job ix. *be equal with God.* That he is *the daysman between*
 33. *us, who lays his hand upon us both,* which is an act
 of umpirage, and can never be done by an infe-
 rior.

If I tell the serious christian that his Saviour is
 less than the Father; nay, that he is *lower than the*
 Heb. ii. 9. *Angels,* he rejoices in it, and knows this was for
the suffering of death. But should I go on and tell
 him, that he is *not God,* that he is in no respect e-
 qual to the justice which we have offended, the
 holiness which we have dishonour'd, and the mer-
 cy to which we must be reconcil'd, the man's
 thunder-struck: not so much because he has thought
 wrong for a great while, but because he knows not
 how to direct his faith, or which way to turn
 his hope. He's unhing'd for practice. The que-
 stion is not, "What have I been *thinking,* but what

" have I been *doing* all this while ! I have wor-
 " ship'd him who is not infinite ; I have depended
 " on him who is not omnipotent ; I have run to
 " an everlasting righteousness which never had an
 " everlasting author : my soul has been drawn off
 " from the only living and true God, and has
 " plac'd its confidence in him who is no more
 " than a creature." The horror of such an argu-
 ment will be equal to the concern that a person
 has about his soul : the more he is in earnest for
 salvation, the more will he be terrified to have any
 doubts about the divine perfections of that *only*
name that's given under heaven among men.

SER M.
XVI.

But on the other hand, people who heed no
 worship, who *find their pleasure on God's holy day*,
 who take his name in vain, are watching over the
 controverſie, as an eagle over a carcass : These long
 to have *the foundations destroy'd*, that there may be
 no difference both in time and eternity between
 the righteous and the wicked, *him that swears, and*
him that fears an oath. Men are pleas'd to see a
 text in danger of losing either its reputation or its
 meaning by a criticism ; not for a love of the truth,
 but to gratifie their contempt of the whole Bible.
 They will quarrel with the mysteries of the Gos-
 pel, that they may be easie under the breaches of
 the law.

Ps. xi. 3.

'Tis plain that the arguments against the Divi-
 nity of Christ are admir'd in a way that some of
 the authors, I hope, never design'd they should be.
 They have this visible effect, to *make the heart of*
the righteous sad, to strike off the believer from his
 main hope, and to *strengthen the hands of the wicked*,
 to encourage the breaking of God's sabbaths, the
 ridiculing of his ordinances, the profaning of his
 name, and the neglect of his worship. It's easie
 to see to which side of the question the swearer
 and the drunkard do incline, and how the religion that

S E R M. *is pure and undefil'd before God and our Father will*
 XVI. determine. We may soon know what the Spirit
 of grace, who mortifies the deeds of the body
 within us, will persuade us to believe: *If any man*
 Joh. vii. *does the will of God, he shall know the doctrine.* If
 17. that's a rule, we shall be able to tell how the cause
 will issue. You may easily perceive which is the
 opinion that leads on prayer, and a serious hearing
 of the word; what's the devout notion, the doc-
 trine that brings us into the presence of God, and
 what puts the faith of a christian more upon a cer-
 tainty.

In one way of talking, a good man knows not
 what he's doing; he comes to a God, and no God;
 he is in a misgiving way of adoration; he does
 worship, and yet he does not: the Scripture has
 call'd it worship, but he dashes it with a distincti-
 on: he talks of a Being who is eternal, and yet
 had a beginning: of one that is equal with the
 Father, and yet *not self-existent*: of an infinite
 Majesty deriv'd from another, to whom he must
 be infinitely unequal, for there is no medium be-
 tween a God and a creature. He that is made
 cannot be God, but must be one of us; and tho'
 he has a greater glory than our nature, yet it must
 be infinitely lower than the Divine. Into such a
 hovering uncertain way will this opinion throw
 us; and those fluctuating thoughts will confound
 our prayer as much as our meditation: we shall be
 divided in ourselves, afraid that faith should give
 a Mediator too little glory, which may be ruinous
 to us, or give him too much, which may be ido-
 latry in the sight of God.

Upon this you will find that men come to re-
 strain prayer; 'tis a notion that takes 'em off their
 knees: if they are careless, they *will not* pray, and
 if they are thoughtful, they *dare not*; for those
 nice turns of language of a God by creation, or

by

by office, or by eternal emanations, are what we S E R M.
can better pass upon the world, than upon our own conscience. When we come to worship, we must *know in whom we have believ'd*. These hard words may do to talk with, but they will not do to pray with. The terms of our new doctrine are no more in the Bible than those of the old creeds, and will not sound very well in prayer. XVI.

5. There's no practical inconvenience in believing that God was manifest in the flesh; it does no harm to our seriousness in any one article of piety or comfort; it does not alienate a man from the life of God, or make him *forsake those assemblies* that should be continued because of a day that's approaching: there's nothing irreligious to be concluded from it. If any one saith, that this is believing what is unaccountable to human reason, the christian confesses it, and at least does as much good *with* a mystery in his head, as another does *without* one. If it's argu'd, that he worships three Gods, he denies it both in language and in fact.

He avows every consequence that men pretend to plead for by their other schemes, as the unity of the Divine Nature, the simplicity and supremacy of God. These doctrines are sacred to him, and he professes nothing which he will allow to be inconsistent with 'em. If men are pleas'd to call these contradictions, we cannot help it. 'Tis own'd that we never could, and never ought to have believ'd 'em, had they not been given us in Scripture; and therefore, if there's any overdoing in this case, it is only in the profound deference that we pay to the wisdom and truth of God: that we will receive what reason cannot comprehend, because he has told us so. Now, it is plain, this does no harm; it feeds duty in our lives, it inspires hope at our death. 'Tis a doctrine

SER M. trine that makes us live with devotion, and die
XVI. with comfort.

6. 'Tis certainly a thing very desirable, and to be wish'd for, that he who was manifest in the flesh, should be God. Dr. *Clark* persues this argument against the Atheists, in his Sermons at Mr. *Boyle's* Lecture. "They must of necessity own, saith he, that supposing it cannot be prov'd to be true, that at least it is a thing very desirable, and which any wise man would wish to be true, for the great benefit and happiness of man, that there was a God, an intelligent, and wise, a just and good being to govern the world." And when he has drawn out this reason the length of three pages, he shuts it up in these words, "Since they are unavoidably oblig'd to confess that 'tis a thing very desirable, there should be a God, they must of necessity be very willing, nay, desire it above all things, to be convinc'd that their present opinion is an error." What he pleads for the great principle of natural religion, we may bring over to the case of revelation. 'Tis certain, that if he who came down among us is a God, our salvation is abundantly better than if he is not; because, from hence we have a nobler instance of his love, a greater proof of the satisfaction he made, and a surer ground for our dependence upon him.

1. 'Twill be easily own'd, that for a God to be manifest in the flesh, is infinitely more kind and condescending than for the highest creature that ever was form'd. For him to come into the world, of whom it is said, that *the world was made by him*, gives a greater lustre to the design, than if as many Angels had come down upon earth, as there are Saints that go up to heaven: for still all this while, it had been only one creature dying for another. We take our estimate of that love that fill'd

fill'd the action, from the distance of him that per-^{S E R M.}
form'd it, and therefore it must be infinitely more ^{XVI.}
for God to do it, than if all the universe should
conspire and agree upon the favour.

2. In this we have a greater proof of the satisfac-
tion that he has made. If his dying procur'd
our pardon, that was not owing merely to the ex-
tremity of the sorrows, but to the dignity of the ^{Heb. i. 3.}
sufferer, *he did by himself purge away our sins.* An
infinite nature was offended, and if there's any
atonement to be made, it must be equal to the ju-
stice that calls for it. A life of three and thirty
years, and a death of three or four hours, could
never balance the eternal misery of so many thou-
sands as are sav'd by it, if the chief consideration
was not had of the Person that endur'd 'em.

Had an Angel died for us, it had been *the just*
for the unjust, a higher nature for a lower; but
as the design of that death was to *bring in an e-*
verlasting righteousness, our very reason tells us such
a sacrifice would not do, that it could not come
up to the demands of eternal justice; it would have
fallen short of the design. And thus uncertain
must a poor christian be left in the chief concern
of his hope. He now expects that God will be
gracious, because he has found a ransom. *Christ Jesus* ^{Job xxxiii.}
gave himself a ransom for many, to be testified in due time, ^{24.}

Now, the question is, whether this would do? ^{Tim. ii.}
that his sufferings were as severe as they could be, ^{6.}
is plain, but were they meritorious? Admit but
into the consideration, that he who died was a
God, and the difficulty is over, because an infinite
nature must do every thing with an infinite value.
If the *sword of God was directed against his fellow,* ^{Zech. xiii.}
if he who took upon him *the form of a servant,* ^{7.}
thought it no robbery to be equal with God, then he
brought all the merit we could wish into his obe-
dience to death, even the death of the cross. And the
blood

230 The Mystery of GODLINESS,

S E R M. blood of such a one *cleanseth us from all sin* : so that,
 XVI. you see allowing him to be God, answers all the
 scruples of unbelief ; it sets our faith clear of many an incumbrance ; we have more peace and joy in believing. And if by this we *receive the atonement*, we have access by faith into the grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

3. In this doctrine we have a better ground for our dependence upon him. *There is no other name given under heaven* ; we look to him as the author and finisher of our faith, and the time is coming when we shall say, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*. Now, it is a great article in our comfort, to know in whom we believe, that he is able to keep what we have committed to him against that day.

“ The best and noblest of creatures can do a great deal, but can they do enough ? Is there not something that my soul wants in the matters of religion and eternity, that lies out of their reach ? I’m sure, it was the effect of Omnipotence that I had faith at first : and what must it be that will take care of this noble creation, and lift it over to glory ? Mine eye is upon Jesus ; if he is God, that answers all my questions at once, because to God all things are possible : if he is not, I shall never be satisfy’d, that he *may not* prove too weak for my dependence ; for there are some things that no creature can do, and how know I but one of ’em may be the securing of my happiness ? therefore denying his Divinity leaves me uncertain. He *may* be sufficient as a creature, but I’m not sure that *he is*. Angels can carry my soul into Abraham’s bosom, but I dare not rely upon them to make me perfect in holiness, and finish the divine image upon me in a moment : nay, I can hardly trust myself for this work in any lower hands than those of a God : and therefore, if
 “ Christ

God manifest in the Flesh.

231

“ Christ is to be *the finisher of this faith*, I cannot S E R M.
 “ be so positive, and have that *confidence of hope* XVI.
 “ *which will be stedfast to the end*, if he is not the Isa. ix. 7.
 “ mighty God, and the everlasting Father, as well
 “ as the Prince of peace. *’Tis because he continues* Heb. vii.
 “ *for ever, that he has an unchangeable priesthood*, 24. 25.
 “ *and is therefore able to save to the uttermost.*

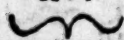
Thus have I consider’d this copious article of the christian faith, as it is a mystery, and as it is a mystery of godliness. The APPLICATION shall be only in two particulars.

1. Hence we see it’s quite wrong to pretend any explication of this doctrine, because that’s the way to destroy all the *mystery*. There are two glories in the article: *First*, that it is true; and *Secondly*, that it’s too great for the comprehension of human reason: and I’m sure it is no service to the former, if we are striving to lay aside the latter. The moment that any people can find out a way for *the natural man to receive it*, it’s no longer what my text has call’d it; they are but *darkening counsel by words without knowledge; uttering* Job xxxviii. 2.
what they understand not, things too wonderful which —xlii. 3.
they know not.

Tho’ many have thus troubled us with words, and confounded us with similitudes, yet we find it will not do: they have only arm’d the heresies which they ought to have destroy’d: and, if it was as easie to batter down the faith, as it is to expose an illustration, there had been an end of the doctrine long before this time. The reason why it has yet a standing in the church, is because it yet continues a mystery, as it is deliver’d in *the word of God which abides for ever*; for we may say of every thing that man reckons his glory, *that it fades away*. *This way of many of the ancients was their folly*, and it is but folly in an uninterrupted succession for *their posterity to approve their sayings*.

Q 4

I’ll

SERM.
XVI.

I'll give you an instance how unhappy the primitive church has been in collecting the doctrine from that which is commonly call'd *the Apostle's Creed*. If some have so little modesty as to give it that name, 'tis pity we have so little zeal as to allow it. 'Tis deficient of the main principles of our religion, 'tis redundant in matters of less importance, and it's confus'd in the method of laying 'em together. There's nothing of the great doctrine of our faith, the Three that bear record in heaven. To say that believing in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, expresses their equality with the Father, is wrong, for we are said as much to believe *in the catholic church*. There's nothing of the atonement that Christ made, but only an historical account of his death; and that so indistinct, that I know not what difference to make between his *suffering* under *Pontius Pilate*, and his being *crucified* and *dying*. 'Twill be hard to deliver these expressions from the charge of a *vain repetition*. There seems to be a design in all this, to tell the story in a partial way, and leave the name of *Pilate* the governor as most abominable in the Creed, tho' that of *Caiaphas* the High-priest was so in the Bible; but here is nothing in all this to tell us what he *died for*. That article of the forgiveness of sins is plac'd under the head of the Holy Ghost (from whom we have our sanctification, but not our justification) and stands apart from those sufferings out of which it rises: and then his incarnation is mention'd with such a blunder, that all languages ought to be ashamed of it. It was said to the Virgin *Mary*, *THOU* shalt conceive and bear a Son; and that word is always applied to *Her*. But to have the act of conception attributed to the *Holy Ghost*, is such a solæcism as no antiquity can protect, and no later times ought to allow.

How

How vain has it been to promote this doctrine S E R M. XVI.
by ways that God never appointed? What little
arts are us'd to shew our orthodoxy; such as bow-
ing at the name of Jesus, standing up at the *Gloria*
Patri, tagging that to the end of every Psalm, sharing
out a creed between two parts of a congregation,
appointing a *Trinity Sunday*, with some other shifts
of the like nature? Have we found these sufficient
barriers against heresie? Does the Deity of Christ
appear the brighter for 'em? or, have they not
rather prov'd a snare to wise men, and a bawble
to fools? I verily believe God has suffer'd this
truth to be run down with learning and scorn, on
purpose to shew us the vanity of trusting to hu-
man ramparts. If the Bible will not support the
doctrine, let it fall.

2. If it is a mystery, there's no knowing it
without the help of the holy Spirit: *He searches* 1 Cor. ii,
all things; yea, the deep things of God. God reveals 10.
'em to us by his Spirit; and from him we have not
only the matter but the language. We speak of 'em
not *in the words that man's wisdom teaches, but which* 13.
the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with
spiritual. Is it any wonder, that they who have
barter'd away all the operations of the Spirit in
prayer, and every other act of religion, should live
to see his Divinity denied? But be you earnest
for this enlightening: study the Scriptures, and
call down his assistance, who can *lead you into all*
truth; for that God who was manifest in the flesh,
is *justified in the Spirit*.





Dec. 7.
1718.

SERMON XVII.



I TIM. III. 16.

— *Justified in the Spirit.*

SERM.
XVII.



THE first great article in the Christian Faith is, that *God was manifest in the flesh*; that he became our companion, in order to be our sacrifice: and the second is like unto it, that *he is justified in the Spirit*: On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets. You have in them the substance of that revelation that spreads a glory quite thro' the Bible. The whole Gospel, in all the editions that the world has of it, is compriz'd in the record that
 10. *God has given of his Son.*

I have gone thro' the former of these, in which it was my fix'd purpose to lay before you, not the fancies of men, whether learned or foolish, whether antient or modern, but the plain doctrine of the
 13. *Scripture in its own language, in words that the Holy Ghost teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* This is the safest way for me to speak, and
 the

the most profitable for you to receive, that *your faith* S E R M. XVII.
may not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of Ver. 5.
God. I shall, in the same method, apply myself to the
 consideration of this other branch, that the God
 who was manifest in the flesh was *justified in the*
Spirit. There is in the words a twofold antithe-
 sis, or distinction from what went before.

The F I R S T is in the *nature* or kind of the reve-
 lation; in the flesh he was *manifest*, in the Spirit he
 is *justified*. The former does not carry the disco-
 very far enough for his whole glory; many saw
 That who were strangers to the latter. That *ma-*
nifestation was an humbling of him, a making him
 of no reputation, shewing him in the form of a
 servant. But when he is said to be *justified*, all
 that reproach is roll'd away. He is defended,
 approv'd of, and set forth in his proper great-
 nefs.

S E C O N D L Y, The other distinction here is a-
 bout the *manner* of the discovery: He was mani-
 fest *in the flesh*, he is justified *in the Spirit*; which
 may be understood these three ways: 1st, That
 the seat of this justification is the spirit or soul of
 man. 2^{dly}, That the nature of it is all inward and
 spiritual. 3^{dly}, That the author of it is no other
 than the Spirit of God. The last of these is the
 chief and proper sense of the word, but the first
 and second are so far from being opposite to it, that
 they are comprehended in it. For what the *Spirit*
 of God does in a way of testimony to the great
 Redeemer, is deliver'd to spiritual receivers, and
 convey'd with a spiritual evidence.

1. He was justified in the Spirit, *i. e.* The *seat*
 of this justification, the place where it is fix'd, is
 the soul of man. That he was *manifest* in the flesh,
 we could *see with our eyes*; our hands might have
 handled the word of life. Friends and enemies, good: John. i.
 and bad believe it, and infidels came within the
 reach

S E R M. reach of this evidence. As he tells the Jews, *Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am.* But when he is justified, that lies all within; there the mind, the conscience, the affections take in the argument. The *manifestation* here spoke of is seeing, but this Gal. i. 16. *justification* is feeling: As the Apostle saith, he reveal'd his Son in me. He was reveal'd to him in a light above the brightness of the Sun at noon-day: He sunk, and fell under the confusion of that glory: But besides that, there's a report made to his soul: He is reveal'd in him.

And this is the great work of the holy Spirit; the thing that he has in charge: not only to make us acquainted with the story, which we have heard Luke i. 2. with our ears; not merely that we may *most surely believe* the matters that were made known to us by those that were ministers and eye-witnesses of the 2 Thes. ii. Word, but we are to receive the love of the truth, and 10. so to be saved. Christ must dwell in our hearts by Eph. iii. faith. Indeed religion fills and feeds the life; it 17. guides our practice, and supplies our duties, but the root of it is in the soul. The Jews would needs know when the kingdom of God came: Our Saviour baffles the question at the same time that he Luke xvii. answers it; *The kingdom of God, saith he, comes not* 20. *with observation:* 'Tis not a matter to be star'd at, but it lies *within you*; if you have it, it's there. Col. i. 27. *Christ is in you the hope of glory.* This then is one interpretation of the words; that tho' God was manifest in the flesh, to be seen of all men, yet he is justified in the Spirit: His throne is establish'd, and his character maintain'd in the souls of believers. 2 Cor. vi. They are the temple of the living God, as God 16. has said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

2. The nature of this justification is all spiritual: As it is deliver'd to the mind and conscience, so it impresses these in a way suitable to the spirit of man.

man. His manifestation was *in the flesh*, by mi-
 racles, signs and wonders to shew his power; by
 meekness, humility, and patience to shew his pu-
 rity; by trouble, shame, and death to declare his
 merit: These were external, the facts upon which
 he sustain'd his character were seen abroad; the thing
 was not done in a corner: but the manner of con-
 veying this to the soul is different. The things of
 the Spirit of God are *spiritually discern'd*. Tho' he
 has us'd similitudes, cloath'd his will with meta-
 phors that are taken from sensible objects, yet 'tis
 not the resemblance that carries 'em to the mind.
 'Tis not acting over the passions, as the Papists do
 in the tragedy of *Good-Friday*; or troubling the
 imagination, and assaulting the senses with strong
 pictures and visible representations: these are the
 toys of a superstitious fancy; a person who grows
 up to a religious manhood will *put away such chil-*
dish things. If all the moisture of the body was
 drain'd out at the eyes, it would not make us pe-
 nitents; nor does the tumult of the affections upon
 this great doctrine make us believers: we may
 have pity, sorrow, or affrightment at the thoughts
 of our Lord's death, and yet have no *faith in his*
blood: *The fellowship of his sufferings* is a great deal
 more spiritual; it lies lower than the senses. The
 whole christian life is begun, maintain'd, and nou-
 rish'd in this secret way. David observes, *Thou*
didst strengthen me with strength in my soul. The A-
 postle speaks of *the hidden man of the heart which is*
not corruptible: and in another place of being *strength-*
en'd with all might in the inner man.

S E R M.
XVII.

1 Cor. ii.
14.

1 Cor. xiii.
4.

Phil. iii.
10.

Psal.
cxxxviii.

3.
1 Pet. iii.

4.
Col. i. ii.

1 Tim. iv.
8.

Rom. ii.
28.

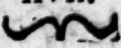
This shews us the nature of true religion; God-
 liness is oppos'd to *bodily exercise*. It does not con-
 sist in noise and bustle: *He is not a Jew who is one*
outwardly, nor is that circumcision that is outward in
the flesh: not but that the name of *Jew* was na-
 tional and public; and the administration of cir-
cumcision

SER. M. circumcision was so external, that it pass for a visible
 XVII. badge of their being God's people : and therefore
 it might have been affirm'd with truth and propriety enough, that a person of such a nation was a *Jew*, and he who had receiv'd such an ordinance was really circumcis'd : but what he means here is, that these outward characters are of no value : if there's any good in the title or in the solemnity, 'tis as they became spiritual. *He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and that circumcision which is of the heart, of the Spirit, and not of the letter, whose praise is not of man, but of God.* The same observation does he make upon an ordinance of the new Testament, *We are sav'd by baptism, not as it is the washing away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.*

Your reading and hearing are duties, but there's no religion in these, any farther than your souls are engag'd : The Word did not profit the *Jews*, not being mix'd with faith in them that heard it. You ought to make a public profession of your faith in a Christ without you, in one who was manifest in the flesh ; contend for the faith that was once deliver'd to the saints ; but your benefit in these things lies all within ; *With the heart man believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.* 'Tis one thing to be satisfy'd about the report that is given us of him, to know and admire the history, to approve and defend the scheme ; and another to derive virtue and life from him, and feel the healing that there is under his wings. We must obey from the heart that form of sound doctrine which is deliver'd to us. He was manifest in the flesh ; but if he is justified with you and me, it is in the Spirit. Both these interpretations of the words are suppos'd in, and deriv'd from, the next, viz.

3. That the Spirit is the author of this justification ; 'tis he that works upon our souls in the manner that

that I have been describing. The whole life of religion is begun and carry'd on by him: He brings us to Christ, and brings Christ to us. This is the great subject of practical and experimental religion; and I shall consider it in the following method.

S E R M.
XVII.


1. How we are to understand this phrase; or what it is for a Saviour to be *justified*.

2. Upon what particular *heads* he has this justification.

3. *When* the Spirit does this office.

4. That He who is thus justified must be *Good*.

5. This, as well as the former branch of our religion, is a *mystery of godliness*.

I. We shall enquire into the sense of the words, that Christ Jesus was *JUSTIFIED*. You know, that when this is applied to sinners, it signifies a pardon to all guilt, and their acceptance in the beloved: that their *iniquities are not imputed to 'em*, Psal. xxxii, but cover'd and blotted out, and remember'd no more: They are blown away as a thick cloud, because *he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*. But, it's plain, this cannot be the meaning of the word when it is applied to him, *who knew no sin; the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot*. He is not justified by the removal of any guilt, or the turning away of God's anger from him. He had *done no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth*: In him the Father was always well pleased. His justification is of another kind, and comprehends these two articles.

1. That he was approv'd and own'd.

2. That he was prais'd and admir'd.

1. He had a Divine approbation; both to his character and to his actions. That he was the Messiah, the anointed of the Lord; and that what he did was right and good. As he saith, *He that sent* John viii.

S E R M. *me is with me, the Father has not left me alone, for I*
 XVII. *do always the things that please him. He was indeed*
 Isa. liii. 3. *despis'd and rejected of men: They call'd his preten-*
 sions an imposture; but at the same time he could
 say, *He that sent me is true, whom ye knew not, but*
I know him, and am come from him. The Apostle
 1 Pet. ii. 4. *observes this distinction, that He was disallow'd in-*
 deed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. And
 as he was always conscious to this himself, so it is
 the very thing that the Spirit gives his witness to
 in the hearts of believers. As Christ saith of his
 John xvii. *disciples, They have known that all things, whatsoever*
 7, 8, 25. *thou hast given me, are of thee; for I have given them*
the words which thou gavest me, and they have received
them, and have known surely that I came out from
thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.
O righteous Father, the world has not known thee, but
I have known thee; and these have known that thou hast
sent me. This was a matter of so much concern to
 our Lord, that he desires such a faith may spread
 among men, *I in them, and thou in me, that they*
may be made perfect in one, that the world may believe
that thou hast sent me.

This was his justification: *I know*, saith he to
 the Jews, *whence I came, and whither I go.* His in-
 ward assurance of this was the thing that he set in
 balance to all their reproaches; as it was foretold
 Isa. l. 6, 7, *he should do: For this reason he gave his back to*
 8, 9. *the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluck'd off the*
hair; he hid not his face from shame and spitting: For,
saith he, the Lord God will help me, therefore I shall
not be confounded; therefore have I set my face as a
flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. And
 in the pursuit of this account, he uses the very
 word of my text, *He is near that justifies me, who*
will contend with me? let us stand together; who is
mine adversary? let him come near to me; behold the
Lord God will help me, who is he that will condemn
me?

me? You see here, that he considers himself as an ^{SER M.} accused person, as one upon his trial; and that he ^{XVII.} looks for all his vindication from above; that none of their charges could be made good. And this was so evident to the confusion of enemies, that the Apostle Peter could tell the Jews, *That Jesus of Nazareth was a man approv'd of God among 'em, by signs and miracles, and wonders that God did by him in the midst of them, as themselves also know.* Acts ii. 22.

2. He was also prais'd and admir'd, as another part of his justification. As it is written, *Let God be true, and every man a liar, that thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.* Rom. iii. 4. There was more than a bare testimony given to his character; for this came attended with commendations. Thus saith the Father of him, *He is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* Mat. iii. 17. When the Seventy return'd and told him, *Even the Devils are subject to us thro' thy name,* he tells 'em there was something else which they should rather rejoice in, viz. that *their names were written in heaven;* but it is observ'd, in that hour he was fill'd with divine pleasure from two things: First, The opening of his kingdom among men, that God who had hid *these things from the wise and prudent, reveal'd 'em unto babes:* Luke x. 22. And, Secondly, From the fulness that this was an earnest of, *All things are deliver'd to me of my Father.* This he declar'd at last, *That the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came from God, and went to God.* John xiii. 3.

II. On what heads is Christ thus justified? I have hinted at these already, and shall now be more distinct and copious. You will find, that the vindication given to our blessed Lord is in the following articles.

1. As to his mission, that he was sent of God.
2. As to his personal glory.

R

3. As

S E R M.
XVII.

3. As to his fitness for the undertaking.
 4. As to the propriety of those methods that he us'd.

5. As to his claim of the great reward above.

6. As to his actual possession of it. Upon those heads did the Spirit give a testimony to him, and thus was he *justified* from all the unbelief of men, and the reproach of devils.

1. He clear'd up his Divine mission ; That he was *sent of God* into the world, as the long expected blessing, the hope of *Israel*. *The promise made to the Fathers was fulfill'd to their children.* The Spirit reveal'd him to those that receiv'd the report.
 Acts xiii. 32, 33. *He that receiv'd his testimony set to his seal that God is true.*
 John iii. 33. *Philip comes full of the character to Nathaniel, We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets did write.*

And, before this, when he was in the meer passive age of life, a poor helpless infant, there was care taken to make him known ; *then* was he justified in the Spirit. Thus we read of *Simeon*, a just and devout man, that he waited for the consolation of *Israel* : as all the good people of every age have done ; they long'd, they pray'd, they believ'd the coming of a Messiah ; but of this good man it is said, that *the Holy Ghost was upon him ; i. e.* as it is afterwards explain'd, it was reveal'd unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not taste death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. This was preparatory warning ; but besides that, the testimony is given in a nearer way ; for it is said, that he came BY THE SPIRIT into the temple, when the parents brought in the child *Jesus*, to do for him after the custom of the law. So that, you see what care the Spirit had to make this discovery ; how early he justified that great Redeemer, who was then manifest in the flesh. Good old *Simeon* was desirous to deliver up his life with his conviction, as if he had
 now

Ver. 27.

now staid long enough : Lord, now lettest thou thy S E R M. XVII.
servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy sal-
vation, which thou hast prepar'd before the face of all Ver. 29.
people. This was from the testimony of the Holy 30, 31.
Ghost ; for Joseph and his mother marvell'd at the Ver. 33.
things that were spoken of him. Nay, that at the
mouth of two witnesses every thing might be esta-
blish'd, there was also one Anna a prophetess, who Ver. 38.
coming in at that instant gave thanks likewise to the
Lord, and spake of him to all them, that look'd for re-
demption in Jerusalem.

This shews that there was a great number of people who believ'd that the fulness of time was not far off. As Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel, so others look'd for redemption in Jerusalem. And therefore the great question now must be that of John's disciples, *Is this he that should come, or* Mat. xi. 3.
look we for another ? To that the Spirit gave in his
witness, He kept those whom the Lord had chosen
from wandring after impostors : As our Saviour
observes, All that ever came before me are thieves and John x. 8.
robbers, but the sheep did not hear 'em. Now, what
is it that always did, and always shall preserve this
little flock from running into the error of the wick-
ed ? Nothing in themselves, but only the care of
that Spirit who leads into the way of all truth. From
this, it is impossible to deceive the Elect ; that the
signs and wonders which those false Prophets and
false Christs are said to do had no influence upon
'em. Such as he had no care of are caught in the
snare. Ye believe not, because you are not of my sheep, John x.
saith our Lord to the Jews. Antichrist, who is 26.
call'd the beast, is said to make war with the Saints, Rev. xiii.
and to overcome 'em ; for power is given him over all 7, 8.
kindreds, and tongues, and nations, and all that dwell
on the earth shall worship him, whose names are not
written in the book of life, of the Lamb slain from the
foundation of the world.

S E R M.

XVII.

Joh. iii.

31.

xvi. 15.

2. Christ is justified by the Spirit as to his own glory, that which he has in his Person. *He that comes from above is above all. The Spirit, saith he, shall glorifie me; for he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.* And what is his? *All that the Father has is mine, and therefore I said he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you; q. d.* My promise refers to no less than the testimony that the Spirit shall give of my equality with the Father. And tho' this is a mystery, it is nevertheless a truth; it is receiv'd with adoration; it comes within none of our descriptions: we are not able to explain it, and yet it's believ'd; it's what we hold by, as *an anchor of hope*, sure and stedfast; 'tis what we are built upon, as *a pillar and ground of truth*. This is the usual work of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, when he has been a Spirit of grace and supplications.

If men live in a sense of religion, in a course of prayer and dependence, to them it's the dear doctrine of their souls, and what they tremble at the thoughts of parting with; for *if the foundations be destroy'd, what can the righteous do?* I may appeal to the characters of persons, that a belief of this doctrine is no bar to *free-thinking*; that the people who entertain it are far from giving up the liberty of their reason; they are not behind-hand with others in paying a regard to that faculty. To represent 'em as going on in a blind implicit way, is to abuse the tenderest part of their reputation. The man who appropriates the title of *free-thinker* to himself, is guilty of an insolence to the world, and a piece of ill manners to his whole nature.

Blessed be God, we have search'd the Scriptures, we have look'd into 'em diligently, and endeavour'd to know the mind of the Spirit; and we think it is a rational way of talking, that if the Spirit is to glorifie Christ, he is to shew us his full glory; and

and that, not in deceitful terms, such as may en-
snare us into idolatry: making him the first of the
creation, is far from coming up to his glory. If
he is really a God, nothing short of Divinity can
be his proper character. 'Tis in vain to tell me
how much better he is than the Angels; that's
not enough if I am to conceive of him as the first
cause, and the last end of the whole creation; *For
by him were all things created that are in heaven, and
that are on earth, visible or invisible, whether they be
thrones, dominions, principalities or powers: all things
were created by him and for him.* S E R M.
XVII.

Now, the Spirit is said to glorifie him by tak-
ing of his, and shewing 'em unto us. And, what
may be call'd his? the allotment made to him of
the Father? some limited portion? no, *ALL that
the Father has are mine.* This cannot be true up-
on any other ground than a full equality: for, if
he is a creature, he is so far from having all that
the Father has, that there is the same infinite di-
stance between him and a God, that there is be-
tween a God and a worm? Every creature is near-
er to an insect than he is to a God; no degrees of
glory can set him above the common character.
But how does Christ appear to those in whose
souls the Spirit has taken his things, and shewn
'em? Did you never know a person loose both in
his talk and his morals, who despis'd God's law
in his actions, and the Gospel in his arguments?
Have you never known such a one awaken'd, con-
vinc'd and made to cry out, What shall I do to be
sav'd? Has he, after this, come to be easie and sa-
tisfy'd in religion, to have a peace and hope in be-
lieving? Enquire of such a one, what he takes his
Saviour to be, what notions he has of *him*, who is
the author, and must be the finisher of his faith?
Certainly the man, by growing sober, has not lost
his reason. Because he minds the sabbath, dare not

S E R M. swear and drink as he us'd to do, will you for this
 XVII. call him an Enthusiast? Here's a remarkable change
 in his life, and shall there be no regard had to
 his way of thinking? I'm apt to believe, it's very
 easie to guess on which side of the question such
 an awaken'd penitent, such an enlighten'd convert
 would give his answer. He'll cry out, as *Thomas*
 did upon a recovery, *My Lord and my God.*

Joh. xx.
 28.

3. Christ is justified in his fitness for the un-
 dertaking: that he is equal to the design. God has
 Pf. lxxxix. *laid help on one that is mighty, one chosen from among*
 19. *the people, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to*
 Job xxxiii. *shew unto man his uprightness.* We are to believe
 23. that he had all that's requir'd in a Mediator between

Isa. liii.

10, 12.
 Heb. ix.
 26.

God and man; a purity in himself that he was
 the holy One of God; a merit in his sufferings,
 that when he was *number'd with the transgressors,*
he made his soul an offering for sin. He put away sin
by the sacrifice of himself. This can arise from no-
 thing but the dignity and value of his Person; not
 only what's *moral*, that he should be innocent, and
 die the just for the unjust; *that* might have been
 said of an Angel; but what may be call'd a *natu-*
ral dignity. The atonement that he made was fit
 for an infinite Majesty to receive, and equal to all
 that an infinite Justice demanded; and therefore we
 read of a G O D *that purchas'd the church with his*
own blood.

Acts xx.
 28.

To say, that this expression does not prove him
 God, because as such he could not die or bleed,
 is an argument that concludes as much against their
 own scheme as any other: for if he is allow'd to
 have any nature besides the humane, if he is above
 the Angels, even *that Nature* could not be said to
 die. Had he been only an Angel, to talk of the
 blood of such a one, is a harshness of language
 that we could not allow; and it can be understood
 no other way than this, that tho' he died, was a
 man,

man, a partaker of that flesh and blood that made S E R M. XVII. him capable of such a fate, yet he was also to be consider'd under a higher character. Now, it is plainly said of him who purchas'd the church with his own blood, that his *superior Nature* was that of a GOD: that as it is certain he was more than a man, so this Word is to tell you *what* he is more.

If any would turn the phrase thus, that the church is indeed the flock of God, which Christ has purchas'd with his blood, methinks, the holy Spirit was aware of that shuffle, and has barr'd against it, by telling us, that this God purchas'd the flock with HIS OWN blood. That phrase is so fully relative to the Person of whom he speaks, that according to his way of talking, the Proprietor and the Purchaser of this church is the same. He *whose* it is (that is God) has laid down the price of it.

There's another interpretation of these words that I have heard of; [for if we follow these notions closely, we shall find 'em shift and double] that the expression *purchas'd with his blood* does not refer to God in the clause immediately foregoing, but to Christ of whom he had formerly spoke; but if you consult your Bibles, you will see that he had not mention'd the name of Christ in less than seven verses before; and one would think the opinion is as far-fetch'd as the connexion; and that certainly people must be strangely in love with a notion, which they're resolv'd to have against all the rules of grammar and language. Whether of the expositions appears to have less of force and violence, ours that joins a word with that which is the nearest to it, or theirs that trails it backwards the length of seven verses, into a sentence that was entire and concluded before?

S E R M.
XVII.Phil. iii.
30, 31.

'Tis upon the head of his fitness for the work of redemption, that the Spirit glorifies the Son: *Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour Christ Jesus the Lord.* And, what are we looking for at his hand? that which is no less than the work of Omnipotence, what none but a God can do: *That he will change our vile body, that it may be fashion'd like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.* If any one saith, that as he is the best and greatest of creatures, so every thing must be subject to him, *that* puts my faith however out of a divine correspondence: it fixes on an object that is *not God*. But, supposing we should use other Scriptures as we do *this*, and say that the term of *subduing all things* does not signifie Omnipotence, where should we have one text to prove that perfection of the divine nature? or how could it be more fully asserted of the Father, than it is here of the Son? What reason have I to think that the words in this Epistle mean infinitely less than they do in *Job xlii. 2. I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no counsel can be withholden from thee?* 'Tis from the Divinity of Christ that we argue his fitness for the whole design; for he must be counted *worthy of more honour than Moses, inasmuch as he built the house, and so has more honour than the house.* And he *who has thus built all things, is God,*

Heb. iii.
3. 4.

S E R M O N

SERMON XVIII.

4.



OUR Saviour is justified in the Spirit, as to the propriety of those methods that he us'd in working out the redemption of his people. He proceeded in the right way, that which infinite wisdom had contriv'd. He pursu'd the plan that was laid in the counsel of peace. *The Son of man went as it was written of him; he spake of his sufferings as the result of a previous agreement: The Father knows me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.* Both his enemies and his people were apt to confine their thoughts, and look no farther than the malice of the *Jews*, that was all enrag'd by the envy of the priests. Thus narrowly do the two Disciples that were going to *Emmaus* tell their melancholy story; that *Jesus of Nazareth was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, but the chief priests and rulers deliver'd him to be condemn'd to death, and have crucify'd him; but, say they, we trusted it had been he who should have redeem'd Israel.* As if they had said, it appears by such a fate, that we were mistaken in our man. They knew not how to bring the cross into their notions of a Saviour: a death of that nature had ras'd out all the regard they us'd to have for his miracles and doctrine.

But in this he is justified by the Spirit: all that scandal's over which was once so important to the Disciples. We can now consider the whole train of his reproaches, torments, and his death as a design: *Him, being deliver'd by the determinate counsel* Acts ii. 23. *and*

S E R M. and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by
XVIII. wicked hands have crucify'd and slain. What a dif-

ferent way of thinking had these good men got into! Before his death they could never be patient at what he often told 'em, that the Son of man should be deliver'd into the hands of men, and they would take him and crucifie him. Peter rebuk'd him for it: *Lord, this be far from thee. Sorrow fill'd their hearts*, they knew not what to say of it; and yet after these things were over, the offence of the cross was made to cease. It was so far from being their dread and shame, as they once thought it, that they could *glory in the cross of Christ*: And tho' this doctrine remain'd a stumbling-block to their countrymen the *Jews*, it was none to them. *They preach'd Christ crucify'd both to the Jews and Greeks, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.*

'Tis plain from a cloud of witnesses out of the old Testament, that the great design of salvation was always reveal'd as a thing to be brought about by the sufferings of a Redeemer. The first promise of all was not silent upon this doctrine: for, tho' *the seed of the woman* was to bruise the serpent's head, yet the serpent was to *bruise his heel*; and all along, as a greater light came in with later prophecies, it was still to shew that there must be an atonement. But the *Jews*, to whom the oracles of God were committed, had a vail upon their minds, and to the last they were blind as to this character of a Messiah. They who were so critical in knowing the place of his birth, and the family out of which he was to arise, never so much as think of the main part that he should act, that he *was to be cut off, but not for himself*. This was so far from being their opinion, that they give it out as a challenge, *If he be the Christ the King of Israel, let him descend from the cross and we will believe.* Now, had

Dan. ix.
26.

Mat. xxvii.
42.

had he descended from the cross, they ought not to have believ'd him: had he not submitted to death, and even of that scandalous sort, he had been none of that Saviour who was to *bear our sins in his body on the tree*, and to make an open shew of principalities and powers, triumphing over 'em in the air. S E R M.
XVIII.

Upon this head he is justified by the Spirit: the Apostles made no secret of that, which we should have thought they might have conceal'd, his being *numbered among the transgressors*. This was no longer a reproach to them, but what they ventur'd to talk of in the most public manner: *They that dwell at Jerusalem and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the Prophets, which are read every sabbath day, have fulfill'd them in condemning him: And tho' they found no cause of death in him, yet they desir'd Pilate that he should be slain: And when they had fulfill'd all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.* This scandalous circumstance of his death they are not asham'd of, but are to own it on all occasions, not only in their doctrines to the people, but their arguments to the enemy. Thus they confronted the greatest authority at Jerusalem: *The God of our fathers rais'd up Jesus, whom ye slew and hang'd on a tree.* Acts xiii.
27, 28,
29.

5. He is justified in the Spirit, as to his claim of a reward in heaven. There was a glory design'd for him, as the recompence of all his duty and trouble. Under that view the Father has call'd him by the name of a servant: *My servant shall deal prudently, and be exalted and extoll'd, and be very high: AS many were astonish'd at him, his visage was so marr'd more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men.* In proportion to the astonishment that was occasion'd by this, so shall he *sprinkle many nations.* It is very evident, the Isa. lii. 13,
14, 15.

S E R M. the reward conferr'd upon him is more than his
 XVIII. own personal glory above; it also takes in an em-
 pire below. Thus he is to sprinkle many nations,

Deu. xxxii. drop the Gospel among 'em *as the rain, and distill*

2. *it as the dew*, by which he will convey a sense of his majesty into the minds of those who before despis'd him: *Kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which has not been told them shall they see, and that which they have not heard shall they consider.*

Little could his enemies, or indeed his Disciples, imagine, that *the contradiction of sinners which he endur'd against himself*, was both the merit and the preparation of a future happiness. But afterwards he approv'd himself to their reasons upon this head:

Luke xxiv. 26. *Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?* His enduring the cross, and despising the shame, is accounted for by this supposition: he submitted to all That for *the joy that was set before him*. This came to be understood as a

Phil. ii. 8, good argument afterwards: *He was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, and THEREFORE*

9. *God has highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name.* During his life-time he was e-

Isa. liii. 4. *steem'd stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* Thus it was foretold they would reason: *Let us persecute and take him, for God has forsaken him;* and so they did in fact: *He trusted in God that he would save him, let him deliver now if he will have him;*

Joh. xvii. 4, 5. *and yet in all this he glorified the Father upon earth, and finish'd the work that was given him to do.*

Upon which he lays his claim to the glory he had with the Father before the world was. *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

6. The Spirit justifies Christ in his actual possession of the reward. In this world he had a claim

claim to it, and now he enjoys the thing itself: *S E R M.*
I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his XVIII.
Throne. This gives a value to the other doctrines: *Rev. iii.*
 for if it can be prov'd that he was rais'd by the *21.*
 Father, and set at his own right hand, it will from
 thence be concluded, that all his former sufferings
 were appointed and admir'd. Now, to this the
 Holy Spirit has given an abundant evidence, and
 made it the main article of our religion. The
 Apostles were set apart to be *witnesses of his resur-* Acts i.
rection; and in this office they acted *by the Spirit,* 22.
 who had been promis'd to 'em. Thus they tell
 their enemies, *Ye denied the holy One and the just, and* iii. 14, 15;
desir'd a murderer to be granted to you, and kill'd the
Prince of life, whom God has rais'd from the dead,
whereof we are witnesses. They repeat the same af-
 terwards upon another trial, with the addition of
 this greater testimony, that is mention'd in my
 text: *Him has God exalted with his own right hand,* Ver. 3;
to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Is- 32,
rael, and forgiveness of sins; and we are witnesses of
these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God has
given to them that obey him. When they speak in
 this manner, 'tis agreeable to what our Lord him-
 self had told 'em: he said unto 'em, *Thus it is writ-* Luke
ten, and thus it behov'd Christ to suffer, and to rise xxiv. 46,
from the dead the third day, and ye are witnesses of 48, 49-
these things, and behold I send the promise of my Fa-
ther upon you.

The miracles they wrought were so many at-
 testations to the glory of a Redeemer. 'Tis thus
 that Peter explains the cure of the poor lame man
 in Solomon's porch: *Ye rulers of the people, and elders* Acts. iv.
of Israel, if we be examin'd of the good deed done to 8, 9, 10.
the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;
be it known unto you, and to all the people of Israel,
that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom
ye crucified, and whom God rais'd from the dead, even

S E R M. *by him does this man stand here before you whole. He goes on to tell 'em what they would not believe, that this is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner; neither is there salvation in any other. The preaching the Gospel, and the wonders they shew'd in confirmation of that doctrine, were so many public arguments that their Saviour had loos'd the bonds of death. Therefore it is said, that with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon 'em all. This was a divine testimony given in to the faith of believers: The salvation that begun to be spoke by the Lord Jesus was confirm'd to us by them that heard him; God bearing 'em witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will. This leads me to shew,*

XVIII.
11, 12.
ver. 33.
Heb. ii. 3, 4.

III. W H E N the holy Spirit gives in his testimony, and fulfills the office that's devolv'd upon him of justifying that God who was manifest in the flesh. This may be consider'd in a way of gradation: he does it *at sundry times and divers manners*. The Scripture has furnish'd us with several particulars. Christ was justified in the Spirit,

1. By the propheticall warnings that were given of him.
2. By his personal furniture.
3. At the hour of his death and suffering.
4. More especially at his resurrection.
5. At the day of Pentecost.
6. In the conviction of sinners.
7. In the consolation of believers.

1. The Spirit justified our dear Lord before his coming into the world. This he did thro' all the ages of religion, ever since *men began to call upon the name of the Lord*. It was by faith that they offer'd

Gen. iv. 26.

offer'd acceptable sacrifices down from righteous *Abel* S E R M. XVIII.
 to the fulness of time: Of this salvation the Pro-
 phets have enquir'd and search'd diligently, who pro-
 phesied of the grace of God that should come unto you. Heb. xi. 4. 1 Pet. i. 10, 11.
Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit
of Christ that was in 'em did signifie, when it testified
before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that
should follow. You see, this was their main en-
 quiry: the thing they prophesied of was the grace
 that should come to us: the Spirit that they pro-
 phesied by was *the Spirit of Christ*: the discoveries
 they receiv'd from That were about the sufferings
 of Christ, and the glory that should follow. They
 did not consider themselves as the servants of a
 particular generation, but took it for granted they
 were writing for posterity: *Unto whom it was re-*
veal'd, that not to themselves, but to us they did mi-
nister the things that are reported unto you. ver. 12.

Tho' Christ was only manifest in these last times,
 yet he was *verily fore-ordain'd before the foundation* ver. 20.
of the world unto our glory: and that was all along
 the food given in to the faith and hope of the old
 Testament Saints. The Apostle tells the *Jews*,
 that this is an affair of which God had *spoken by*
the mouth of all his Prophets since the world began; Acts. iii. 21.
 by which assertion you see what a compass he takes
 both in breadth and length. *All the holy Prophets*
have born this testimony, and they have done it
ever since the world began. He gives 'em an in-
 stance, that *Moses truly said unto the Fathers, a Pro-*
phet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you like ver. 22, 24.
unto me: And then adds, *Tea all the Prophets from*
Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have
spoken have likewise foretold of these days: As if
 that was their main business, to let the world know
 what God would do in the fulness of time. He
 speaks of this as the grand concern: *Behold the days* Jer. xxiii. 14, 15.
come, that I will perform that good thing which I have
promis'd

S E R M. promis'd to the house of Israel, and the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. XVIII.

Heb. xi. 40. Out of these particulars the Apostle works an argument, by which he would insinuate himself, and the doctrine that he came with, to the esteem of the Jews: *Ye are the children of the Prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers.* This was the office of the Spirit in those early ages, not only to give 'em light about their present duty, but to put 'em in mind of that better thing that God had provided for us. For these all died in faith, not having receiv'd the promises, but they saw 'em afar off, were persuaded of 'em, and confess'd they were pilgrims and strangers upon the earth. 'Twas thus that David being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath unto him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, nor did his flesh see corruption.

2. Our Lord was justified in the Spirit as to his personal furniture. We read of his qualifications for an office that never any but himself was put into: *He whom God has sent, speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure to him.* What he did either in a way of duty or of miracle is ascrib'd to this. 'Twas thus that he discover'd himself to be the Mediator between God and man, and determin'd the faith of good people in the greatest concern they could have. John the Baptist must have been acquainted with him in his childhood and youth, their mothers being so near relations. He must have heard of the wonderful things that happen'd at the visit that Mary paid to Elisabeth, who cried out, *Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come unto me; for lo,*

Joh. iii. 34.

Luke i. 43, 44.

as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leapt in my womb for joy. He heard, no doubt of it, what things his own father said at his circumcision, that he should be the Prophet of the highest, and clos'd it with those words, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who has redeem'd and visited his people; and what Simeon and Anna declar'd soon after the birth of Jesus. Tho' he continu'd in the desarts, he could not be such a stranger in Israel, as not to have the record of these events.*

S E R M.
XVIII.ver. 68,
76.

But yet he professes that the main testimony was given by the holy Spirit: *I knew him not, faith he, i. e. not fully, not free of all scruple, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he that shall baptize with the holy Ghost; and I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* The passage he refers to, is what the several Evangelists have given us, that when Jesus was baptiz'd and pray'd, the heaven was open'd, and the holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, *Thou art my beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased.* Thus does Christ speak of his ministerial qualifications, that a fulness of wisdom was in him: *The Spirit of the Lord, faith he, is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the Gospel.* And this was long since foretold, that the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord. Thus he perform'd his miracles, as Peter tells Cornelius, *God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppress'd of the Devil; for God was with him.* This was the method into which he threw his designs, for he was

Joh. i. 33;
34.Mat. iii.
16, 17.Luke iv;
18.

Isa. xi. 2.

Acts x. 38;

S E R M. *led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of*
 XVIII. *the Devil.*

Mat. iv. 1. 3. The Spirit justified our dear Lord at the hour of his death and sufferings. This was by giving value to his blood, and supporting the courage and resolution of his humane nature. The Scripture has been very particular, that *thro' the eternal Spirit, he offer'd himself without spot unto God.*
 Heb. ix. 14. It was not merely the extremity of dying that brought in an everlasting righteousness, but the merit arose from the dignity of him that suffer'd. He was then full of the holy Ghost. This set a joy before him that made him neither afraid nor ashamed to die: for if it is said of Stephen, that *he being full of the holy Ghost, look'd up stedfastly to heaven, and saw the glory of God,* much more may it be affirm'd of him who had not the Spirit by measure.
 Acts vii. 55.

4. Another time when the Spirit did his office, was upon the resurrection of our Saviour. Then
 Rom. i. 4. *was he declar'd to be the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness.* Sometimes this work is ascrib'd to the Father, that *he glorified his Son Jesus, he rais'd him from the dead, and gave him glory.* Thou, saith Christ, *wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy One to see corruption.* Sometimes it is said of the Son himself, that *he loos'd the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.* This agrees to what he had told 'em before: *No man takes my life from me; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.*
 Acts iii. 13.
 1 Pet. i. 21.
 Psal. xvi. 10.
 Acts ii. 24.
 Joh. x. 18.

And in several places it is asserted of the holy
 Rom. viii. 11. *Ghost.* Hence we read of *the Spirit of Him who rais'd up Jesus from the dead,* that this Spirit is to *quicken us.* He was put to death in the flesh, but *quicken'd in the Spirit.* Under this head I may bring in the great things that he did between his
 1 Pet. iii. 18. leaving

leaving the sepulchre, and going up for good and S E R M.
all to the kingdom. His conversation with the XVIII.
Disciples for the space of forty days is mention'd
this way, that *he thro' the holy Ghost had given com-* Acts i. 2.
mandment to the Apostles whom he had chosen. 'Twas
thus that he instructed 'em, and open'd their under-Luke
standings: for he had told 'em before his death, *I* xxiv. 45.
have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear 'em Joh. xvi:
now: howbeit, when the Comforter is come, whom I 12, 13.
will send in my name, he shall lead you into all truth.
So that when he spake to 'em concerning things
pertaining to the kingdom of God, it was *thro' the*
holy Ghost that he gave 'em commandments. In
this manner they were not only perswaded of his
resurrection themselves, but led into the right way
of declaring it to others: *That repentance and remis-*
sion of sins should be preach'd among all nations in his
name, beginning at Jerusalem. Thus he was justi-
fied in the Spirit.

5. This was most eminently done at the day of
Pentecost: they tarried at *Jerusalem* till they were
endued with power from on high. This he calls *bap-* Luke
tizing 'em with the holy Ghost: he fell upon every one xxiv. 49:
of 'em. All the retinue of that effusion was won- Acts i. 5:
derful, the manner of its coming on, and every
consequence that follow'd after. There was sud-
denly a sound from heaven as the rushing of a mighty ii. 2, 3, 4:
wind, and it fill'd all the house where they were sit-
ting: And there appear'd unto 'em cloven tongues like as
of fire; And they were all fill'd with the holy Ghost,
and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit
gave 'em utterance. This amaz'd, as well it might,
all the devout men that were gather'd from every na- ver. 7:
tion to the feast at *Jerusalem.* But,

Peter defends the Providence against them that
mocked, and explains it to those that *marvell'd.*
That they are to understand it two ways: First,
as an accomplishment of an ancient prophecy

- S E R M. out of *Joel*. And, *Secondly*, as a testimony given
 XVIII. from heaven to that Person whom they had despis'd, and hated, and kill'd. From hence they might see, that he was admitted into the honours of another world, tho' he had been so rudely treated in this: *Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having receiv'd of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost, he has shed forth this which ye now see and hear.* What they saw and heard gave in a full evidence, that tho' he had been despis'd and rejected of men, yet he was chosen of God, and precious. And upon the whole he concludes, *Let all*
 ver. 33. *the house of Israel know assuredly, that the same Jesus whom ye have crucified, has God made both Lord and Christ.* By this they might find he was another sort of Person than they took him for; the great Head of authority above, and the great Head of influence below. Such an effusion as that was an argument of his having a throne. He could not be deserted of the Father, as they imagin'd, if he receiv'd such a fulness into his own hands, and made these distributions among his people. This is what the Apostle *Peter* enlarges on in his speech or sermon, and he refers to it afterwards in his
 i Pet. i. letter, that *the Gospel is preach'd with the holy Ghost*
 12. *sent down from heaven.*

6. The Spirit continues to justify Christ in the conviction of sinners: he attends the preaching of the Gospel, and makes it useful to those who are *dead in trespasses and sins*, as our Lord promis'd he should do: *When he is come he shall convince the*
 Joh. xvi. *world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; Of sin,*
 8, 9, 10, *because they believe not in me; Of righteousness, because*
 11. *I go to the Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*

These are things that none but the Spirit can impress upon us: they are what man's wisdom is so far from teaching, that it reckons 'em *foolishness*.

The sin of not believing in him gives no trouble S E R M. XVIII. till they are made to see what he is in himself, and what he must be to them, if ever they are happy. Their unbelief is what they us'd to plead for; they had a great many arguments to defend it: but when the Spirit fell to work with 'em, as it is said of the *Jews* who gloried in having shed his blood, they were *prick'd in their hearts, and cried out, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Acts ii. 37. then this sin lay heavy upon 'em.

It's the same as to that righteousness that is reveal'd to us [by the holy Spirit. Men by nature have no notion of any other acceptance with God than what they give themselves: but when the holy Ghost has humbled us for our iniquity, he shews us that no merit of ours can be the ground of a pardon; but the righteousness in which we are justified is owing to this, that *Christ is gone to the Father*. He leads us up to the Advocate whom we have above, and engages all our desires to be found in him. And then, lest their convictions should be attended with dark thoughts about the event of a war with Satan, he tells 'em that the *prince of this world is judged*, and that we come by our peace, and hope, and joy in believing. 'Tis his blessing upon our ministry, that makes Christ known among you: *Ye are manifestly declar'd to be the epistles of Christ ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.* 2 Cor. iii. 3.

7. The Spirit justifies our blessed Lord by the consolations that are given to a believer. Our duty is express'd by *walking in the Spirit*; our privilege is Gal. v. 25. call'd a being *led by the Spirit*; and, as many as are Rom. viii. 14. *so are the Sons of God*. Now, in all this operation, he is leading the soul nearer to Jesus Christ. *He shall glorify me, saith our Lord, for he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you.* Thus he carries on the

SER M. *work of faith with power.* The holiness he recommends to us is that he shews in *Christ*; He takes of *his*: And when he conveys any comfort into our souls, it's a taking of *his*, revealing his love and his grace, and from each of these he raises in the believer a courage to die as the Apostle argues;
 XVIII. *Now little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear, ye may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

The sanctification that the Spirit gives us is a living argument that Christ is *head over all things unto the church*: We, as the several members, are nourish'd by a derivation from him, and *increase with the increase of God*. It's thus we know, that he has reconcil'd our souls to Divine justice, and that he has renew'd and prepar'd 'em for the Divine mercy.
 I John ii. 28. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and it is the Spirit that bears witness, because the Spirit is truth.* How does he bear witness of these things, that Christ came both for our atonement and for our holiness; but by throwing his evidence within, giving us a conformity to him, and making us partakers of his purity and of a gladness among *his* fellows? This is part of the kingdom of God, which consists in peace and joy in the holy Ghost. And happy are the people that justify Him who laid down his life to justify them.
 I John v. 6. *No man, speaking by the Spirit of God, calls Jesus accursed; and no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the holy Ghost.*



SERMON XIX.

Jan. 1.
1718.

IV.



E who is thus justified in the Spirit is no other than the most high SERM. XIX.
G O D. The name that he goes by in the first branch of our religion runs thro' the other ar-

ticles and belongs to all the great things that are said of him in the text. I have shewn you, that he could never have answer'd the end of being *manifest in the flesh*, if he had not been *God over all, blessed for ever*. And I shall now consider his Divine Nature, as it farther appears from the testimony of the holy Ghost; that He, who receiv'd such a witness as this, must be God. Because, the Spirit is what he himself purchas'd and deserv'd; what he sent upon his own authority: This Spirit represents him as equal to all the demands of God's justice, as the giver of all the grace that his people want; as one capable of answering our dependence; and as a person entitul'd to the glory of another world. Such a testimony as this is too much for a creature: it's only a God who can be thus *justified in the Spirit*.

1. Consider, that the Spirit who gives in this testimony of Christ, is sent down upon the *purchase* made by Him. Now, who is he that could *deserve* so great a gift to his church? that merit did not arise merely from the violence of his pain, or the innocence of his person. Suppose an An-

S E R M. gel had put on a dying nature, and made himself
 XIX. capable of enduring the cross, what had been the
 proper reward to such an obedience? We may
 imagine, that as men had put him to death, so his
 integrity would be clear'd; and as God had ap-
 pointed it, so he should have a greater honour up-
 on his return to heaven; but can it be thought that
 in this action he could be significant enough to
 make a purchase *for others*? And that, of the great-
 est blessings that ever can be given? If such an An-
 gel was exalted to a higher degree of *personal* glory,
 'tis as much as he could expect; but is it likely,
 that we in this lower nature should be ever the
 better for what he did?

Well, do but give a little scope to your medi-
 tations; consider what Christ has drawn in, and
 collected to himself by dying; not only *a name a-*
bove every name, a better estate than that of the An-
 gels, but a fulness of grace for all his people. There
 are many thousands in the different ages and coun-
 tries of the world for whom he has *obtain'd an eter-*
nal redemption.

And what does this salvation begin with, what
 is it assur'd by, but the gift of the holy Spirit?
 Eph. i. 12, Ye trusted in CHRIST, *after ye had heard the word*
 13, 14. *of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in WHOM al-*
so, after ye believ'd, ye were seal'd with that holy Spi-
rit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance,
until the redemption of the purchased possession to the
praise of HIS glory. This is more than any crea-
 ture can deserve: the merit must arise from the
 dignity of the person that suffer'd, because it reach-
 es not only to himself, but the whole body of his
 people: and besides, it includes not only the com-
 mon favours which they had lost, but the greatest
 blessing that God himself could give. God reveals
 1 Cor. ii. by this Spirit *the things that he has prepar'd for them*
 10, 12. *that love him: We have receiv'd not the Spirit of the*
world,

world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. S E R M.
XIX.

Now, what must He be, whose blood had such a value in it, that for his sake, the Spirit should come down from on high, to fill his place, to do his work as a deputy, and to share his glory as a partner? The Prophet puts the question so high, that no creature can answer it; *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, and who, being his counsellor, has taught him?* We may, with still more reason, ask, who could deserve this Spirit of the Lord, or have merit enough to oblige him? Or, to put it into the Prophet's next words, *Who has first given to the Lord?* No creature in heaven or in earth could pretend to the former, to direct that Spirit who has produc'd and modell'd the universe, and as little could any deserve him, or lay him under an obligation to come and do a greater task than making the world, Isa. xl. 13.

But such a one there is to whom the Spirit was owing, for whose sake believers should have him; or, to preserve the language of the Bible, he has first given to the Lord, and therefore it shall be repaid him. Here's one who has redeem'd them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons; and because they are sons, the Spirit of the Son is sent into their hearts, crying, *Abba, Father.* He has done that, which makes it more than an act of bounty for the holy Ghost to be sent; 'tis what eternal justice owes him: And who is he, that could thus bargain with God, and not only desire, but demand the greatest blessing that he ever did give, or ever will? Christ has claim'd all this to himself. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth, who dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* Do but take the whole scheme of redemption together; consider with care what the gift of the Spirit is; how useful, how glorious! Rom. xi.
31.
Gal. iv. 5,
6.
John xiv.
16, 17.

S E R M. glorious ! and remember of *This* there was a purchase, *i. e.* something was done of equal value to it, that fully deserv'd it. Think seriously of the matter in this connexion, and the current of your meditations will have weight enough to bear down *the crackling of thorns, and the laughter of fools.*

2. This Spirit is sent by our Lord's authority. Sometimes he represents his part in sending him as an act of intercession: *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter,* and there's no doubt to be made of it, but he carried to heaven with him the begging, the inferior, the depending nature; that with which *in the days of his* Heb. v. 2. *flesh he offer'd up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.*

But he also speaks in a language that signifies a great deal more; as if it was his own 'doing: *If I go away, I will send him to you.* This was the result of his own greatness, and his return to the glory that he had with the Father before the world was. *I send,* saith he, *the promise of my Father upon* Luke xxiv. 49. *you; and this was enduing 'em with power from on high: 'tis the first grant that he makes from his throne: they were to be endued with power from on high, when he himself had receiv'd all power both in heaven and in earth. The Angels then begun to pay him their homage: for, When the first* Heb. i. 6. *begotten was brought again into the world, it was said, Let all the Angels of God worship him. He has also given proper notice of his accession to that dignity among those few sheep whom he had left in the wilderness: The Spirit was not given till Jesus* Joh. vii. 39. *was glorified. The Scripture, by putting things into that order, lets us see that this is one consequence of his Majesty; it comes in among the first-fruits of his empire.*

And;

And, who is great enough to make such a disposal, at whose command the eternal Spirit comes down, and goes thro' the mighty offices of a Sanctifier and a Comforter? This Spirit who should lead 'em into all truth, was *not to speak of himself, but whatsoever he heard he was to speak*: and, saith Christ, *he shall glorifie ME, for he shall take of MINE, and shew it unto you.* We may use our Lord's own argument: Whether is greater, he that is sent, or he that sent him? certainly, he that sent him. Now, if Jesus had only a created nature, this is more than he could do: men and Angels cannot give the Spirit; but he speaks like a God. *He breath'd on the Disciples, saying, receive ye the holy Ghost.*

S E R M.

XIX.

Joh. xvi.

13. 14.

xx. 22.

This is what none could say but himself. I don't deny, but some vain men have pretended to use those words; but theirs ought to be number'd among the mouths that speak blasphemy against the tabernacle of God, and some of 'em receiv'd the due reward of their deeds. This language of Christ was fitted to no lips but his own. There could not be a greater crime than to suppose, that the gift of God might be purchas'd with money. Consider the design, the nature, the mystery of the Spirit's operations, to what purposes he is present with believers thro' all the dangers and duties of life, and how he carries 'em over death and darkness into the mansions above; and then remember who it is that sends him, and you will soon conclude, that he comes from the God of salvation, to whom belong the issues from death. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who works all in all.

Pf. lxxviii.

20.

1 Cor. xii.

4. 5. 6.

3. You may farther argue the Divine Nature of our Redeemer from the testimony that the Spirit gives

S E R M. gives to him *in your own souls*, when it leads you
 XIX. to depend upon him for acceptance with God. I
 do not wonder, that they who deny his Deity,
 throw contempt upon his satisfaction. As they
 Heb. x. 29. have trodden under foot the Son of God, they count the
 blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an
 2 Pet. ii. unholy or a common thing; thus denying the Lord that
 1. bought 'em. 'Tis plain, they see no need of this
 atonement; they can imagine a way to happiness
 without it. And from hence you may conclude,
 that the Spirit has not convinc'd them of *sin*; he
 has not bound upon the conscience all the severity
 and terror of a righteous law. The Apostle was
 without the law once; tho' he pretended to value it,
 yet by that he could see no fault in himself; but
 brings in this verdict, that *touching the righteousness
 of the law, he was blameless*. Thus was he alive in
 his own opinion; no pains or sense of death gave
 Rom. viii. him any trouble; but at last the commandment came,
 9, 13, 14. by which phrase he must signifie a great deal more
 than his regard to it, for that he had all along; it
 came with a new sort of weight, for then *sin re-
 viv'd, and he died*. He would no longer think
 himself blameless touching the righteousness of the
 law, for the commandment that was ordain'd unto life,
 he found to be unto death; not that that which was
 good in itself was made death to him, but *sin by the
 commandment appear'd exceeding sinful*: for, saith he,
the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.
 Just so it will be with every one of us, when the
 Spirit of God does those offices upon our souls
 that he is sent into the world about, *i. e.* to con-
 vince of sin, and righteousness, and judgment.
 When he has convinc'd us of sin, he has virtually
 struck off all our dependence upon the creature:
 we dare trust to no duties, no graces or comforts;
 these are imperfect and impure; neither great e-
 nough in their quantity, nor good enough in their
 nature.

nature. We then look to Christ for *righteousness*, S E R M. XIX.
because he is gone to the Father.

How should his *going to the Father* make us apprehensive of a righteousness by him? It certainly proclaims the Divinity of his Person, that he is equal with God, and as such a one, he is gone to manage the whole concern of our redemption. An infinite Nature was offended in its holiness, and engag'd against us in its justice. Now, who could be fit to transact with him upon the head of peace and reconciliation? *Job* takes it for granted, that there could be no pardon, because, saith he, *He is not a man as I am, that I should come before him.* His argument turns upon this, that whoever deals with God in a treaty of salvation for poor lost sinners, must be upon *his level*; as great as he is, or as he is call'd a *days-man between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.* The Lord Jesus Christ in coming down upon earth, proves himself to be *form'd out of the clay*, a true representation of one party, he was *made lower than the Angels for the suffering of death.* But now, in his *going to the Father*, we are convinc'd that what he did was the *righteousness* in which his people are found, that the *sword of God* has been directed *against the man* Zech. xiii. 7. *who is his fellow. He knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come* Joh. xiii. 3. *from God, and went to God.*

It's only in this view that an awaken'd conscience can have peace. The Spirit, after he has unsettled the sinner, and put him by his other dependencies, shews him a merit that will do; that, tho' Christ is in the form of a servant, he *thinks it no robbery to be equal with God.* The soul regards him as *JEHOVAH our righteousness.* Destroy that Jer. xxiii. 6. title, and our comfort in him gives way. When he invites *the ends of the earth to look unto him that* Isa. xlv. 22. *they may be saved,* he gives this reason for the call, this

S E R M. this ground for their hope, that *he is the Lord, and*
 XIX. *there is none else.* And when the believer gives out
 the confidence that he has in him, 'tis still upon
 ver. 24. this bottom: *In the Lord shall one say I have righte-*
ousness and strength; to him shall men come, and in
him shall the seed of Israel be justified.

Indeed the name of *Lord*, as well as that of *God*, is scatter'd among the creatures: *There are Gods many, and Lords many*; but when it is us'd with the highest attributes, when the greatest things are affirm'd of him that has it, the sense is determin'd. If we read of a *Lord* that gives us food and raiment, and protects us in our way, perhaps there is no necessity to understand so much by it: but the *Lord*, in whom we have *righteousness*, to appear in the presence of eternal Justice; the *Lord*, by whom we have *strength*, to encounter Satan, to go forth conquering, and to conquer; he by whom *all the seed of Israel* in every country, people, tongue, and nation, in every age of the world, are to be justified and to glory, must be the *Lord*, besides whom there is none else; for he that glories is *to glory in the Lord*.

It is suppos'd that He who undertook our redemption was in this respect equal to the design, because *being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person, after he had by himself purg'd away our sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* There are four things to be observ'd in the gradation of that sentence.

Heb. i. 3.

First, That it was not every one who could enter into the design: he that does it must be *the brightness of the Father's glory*, and the express image of his Person. It was necessary he should have such a dignity in himself, or otherwise he had fallen beneath the undertaking. If he was not all this, it signified nothing what he could do.

Secondly, It was this personal merit that made the S E R M. XIX.
atonement. By himself he purged away our sins; not only as he made an offering of himself, but his own virtue convey'd a value to those sufferings, and made 'em effectual.

Thirdly, 'Tis from both these considerations that he takes his place at the right hand of God. He could not have gone thither, had he not been the brightness of his glory: and therefore tho' the expression of sitting at the right hand does sometimes signify the happiness of a creature, what believers are capable of, 'tis plain that cannot be the meaning here. For Christ's taking that place is put upon the dignity of his person, that he was equal to the Father; and in that character, as soon as he had done his work on earth, he went up to heaven. And therefore,

Fourthly, This must signify that in him which cannot be given to a creature, because the reasons for it are peculiar to himself; and it's understood in such a sense, as makes it incommunicable; *For to which of the Angels said he at any time, Sit thou at my right hand?* ver. 5.

4. The Spirit leads us to Christ as the giver of what we want. They are his people whom he makes Psal. cx. 3. willing; they worship him in the beauties of holiness. He is the author and finisher of faith. He has pro- Heb. xii. 2. mis'd to be with us to the end of the world. This Matth. xxviii. 20. cannot be understood of his human nature; for the heavens have receiv'd that till the time of the restitution of all things. Acts iii. 21. And therefore when he tells the Disciples, *Yet a little while, and ye see me no more; and again, yet a little while, and ye shall see me;* it must be understood of two different natures; unless we will dash upon a contradiction, and make one part of the sentence destroy the other. They were to see and know him *no more after the flesh*; whither Cor. v. 16. he went they could not come: and yet he would see 'em

S E R M. 'em again, and not leave 'em comfortless. Nay, he
 XIX. tells 'em, that his presence with 'em would be vital;
 John xiv. sufficient to all the purposes of duty, and a full
 18. security of happiness; *because I live, ye shall live*
 ver. 19. also. There was to be a communication, a vein of
 influence reaching from heaven to earth; a life from
 him streaming down to them.

And what apprehensions must we have of him,
 who is the fountain of such an existence? Who
 must he be that makes us live over again, that gives
 us a *part in the first resurrection*? How shall we find
 a harmony between what he saith to the Father,
 and this that he tells the Disciples? To the Father
 John xvii. he professes, *I am no more in the world; but these are*
 11. *in the world, and I come to thee*; and yet to his peo-
 Matt. xviii. ple he has promis'd, *Wherever two or three are met*
 20. *in my name, I am in the midst of 'em*. The council
 at *Jerusalem* took knowledge of the Apostles, that
 Acts iv. *they had been with Jesus*: How could that be, when
 13. he was in heaven, and they on earth? They must
 mean, either that their having been formerly with
 him had left impressions behind; or rather, that
 they were struck with a sense of some new con-
 versation; they took knowledge that they had been
 with Jesus. Now who is it that could be both in
 heaven and earth, but he who had said of him-
 John iii. self to *Nicodemus*, that *no man had ascended up into*
 13. *heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the*
Son of man, who was then in heaven.

All religion is the work of a God. A convert
 i. 14. is born, *not of flesh, nor of the will of man, nor of*
blood, but of God. The author of every good and
 Jam. i. 17, perfect gift is the *Father of lights, of his own will*
 18. *does he beget us by the word of truth*. And there-
 fore, if we have our dependence upon Christ for
 these things, the Spirit, in leading us to him, tells
 us what he is. The Apostle numbers the steps by
 which he went up to his glory: first, that he was
 rais'd

rais'd by the working of a mighty power; then, set at S E R M. XIX.
 the right hand of God, Angels, and principalities, and dominions being made subject to him; and then, ap- Eph. i. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.
 pointed to be head over all things unto the church. Now how can he be equal to this relation, if he is no more than a creature? For the church is his body, which he not only guides, but animates. He is the head, from which an influence comes that exceeds all the courses of nature, and therefore he must have the fulness of him, who fills all in all. As the consequence and argument of such a capacity, he quickens those who are dead in trespasses and sins. ch. ii. 1.
 This quickening is the same with working faith in 'em, and that was by such an exceeding greatness of his power, as could be equal'd by nothing but his own resurrection. Now, who is it that quickens the Rom. iv. 17.
 dead, and calls the things that are not as tho' they were? This act of conversion is all along made to be as great as a resurrection; and therefore if a Divine power is necessary for the one, it must be so for the other.

Abraham's faith was acting a great part, when he believ'd in God that raises the dead. And what must the Spirit teach us to think of a Redeemer, when we are led to him as the author of grace? when he puts us into a state of perpetual derivation from him, that the whole body being thus maintain'd, may encrease with the encrease of God? Can this be, if they do not encrease with the gifts of a God? 'Tis for this reason that the words are us'd promiscuously; sometimes we are said to be call'd of God, and sometimes preserv'd in Christ Jesus, and called. We are the workmanship of God, and yet Jude 1.
 are created anew in Christ Jesus. Our religion is a renewal of us into the image of him that created us. God dwells in us, and we in him, saith the Apostle John: I will be in you, and you in me, saith Christ himself. The Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ

S E R M. are spoke of under the same attributes. The scripture uses either of the expressions as meaning but one thing. And can we think that a creature must have his name us'd in common with God, who is at an infinite distance from every work of his hand, whatever glory he has imparted to it? Why should the Apostle talk in the same breath of two such distant natures, and observe no guard or modesty in his transition from the one to the other?

XIX. *Rom. viii. Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of GOD dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of CHRIST, he is none of his; and if CHRIST be in you, the body is dead, because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of HIM who raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, HE that raised up Christ from the dead shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.*

5. The Spirit leads us to Christ, as one that can answer all our dependence upon him. *Acts iv. 12. There is no salvation in another, nor any other name given under heaven among men, whereby we shall be saved.* After the soul is quicken'd, we are to live upon him. *Phil. i. 6. The same hand that begun the good work is to carry it on and perform it.* As we say that Providence is a continued creation, so the preserving of our faith and hope and love is the work of him who implanted 'em. He is the *author*, and we look to him as the *finisher*, of our faith.

And who can this be but the Almighty? The Apostle tells us, that no less than a Divine Nature can secure salvation to the humane. See how things are join'd together, and how little room there is for any unglorious distinction between him *that sits on the throne and the Lamb.* We pray for you, saith he, that our God would count you worthy of his calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and

2 Thess. ii.
11, 12.

and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. SER M.
XIX.

There is a great deal of pains taken to shew that the Scripture has never attributed the work of creation to a Redeemer; and there must be a great deal more before they are able to cast a cloud upon the evidence we have for it. But if there is any doubt about that, here's a much greater work, and which is apparently Divine, that claims Him as an Author. And would that God, whose name is *Jealous*, suffer those actions that are his chief glory to be mention'd as belonging to a creature? Certainly *he that has wrought us for the self-same thing is God.* 2 Cor. v. 5
Our preservation is ascribed to a Redeemer, and yet we can depend upon no less than *the grace of God, that shall keep us thro' faith unto salvation.* 1 Pet. i. 5
Our Saviour begs, *Father, keep thro' thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* John xvii, 11. And yet this is the very thing that he promises upon the foundation of his own authority; *They are my sheep, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck 'em out of my hand.* Ch. x. 28; 29, 30.
And tho' he adds, *My Father who gave 'em me is greater than all, and none shall pluck 'em out of my Father's hand;* yet he does not say this to contradict his own equality with God: He immediately retrieves what some people desire should be lost, that *he and his Father are one*: And if he did not mean by it what the words do plainly import, there was no occasion for the *Jews to take up stones*, and charge him with *blasphemy, because that he being a man had made himself God.* ver. 33 For tho' he tells 'em that some in their law were call'd *Gods*, yet he distinguish'd himself from them: they were people to whom the word of God came, creatures, subjects, and dependents; but he was *sanctified, and sent into the world.* 35, 36
He does not claim the title by virtue of an office, but saith, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* 37 It was not for doing any good works,

S E R M. that their Kings were called *Gods*, but merely on the account of their station; but he avows himself to be a God, as doing *the works of the Father*. Not because the Father had appointed 'em, for that every good man, and especially every prophet, might have said; but such as none but the Father could do: *Tho' ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe*, What? that he is commission'd and sent into the world? No; but that *he is in the Father, and the Father in him*.

Thus the Spirit leads us to a dependence upon him, for that which none but a God can do. *We look for the mercy of the Lord Jesus unto eternal life*. Now it's certain, *power belongs unto God, also unto him belongs mercy; and the gift of God is eternal life*. And therefore when he had directed us to look to Christ, he concludes with a doxology that tells us who he is; *Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before his glory with exceeding joy* (these works are frequently attributed to Christ, he will *present the Church to himself*; and yet he who is capable of doing this is) *the only wise God our Saviour, to whom be glory, majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever, Amen*.

6. The Spirit leads us to him; as one entitled to all the glory of another world. *I overcame, saith he, and am sat down with my Father upon his throne*. He shall glorify me; for he shall take of mine, and shew it unto you. *ALL that the Father has is mine, and therefore I said he shall take of mine: q. d. I speak of that fulness that I have equally with the Father*. He went up *far above all heavens, that he might fill all things*. This is not speaking of him as a creature. What shuffling and mingling of senses is there, when we talk of the worship that was given him on earth! and yet the Scripture makes no difference between what is paid to the Father and to him in heaven. *Can every creature in heaven, and on earth,*
and

and under the earth, and in the sea, do any more than say, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be to him that sits on the throne? and yet the same do they ascribe unto the Lamb for ever. Is there any more in the first part of the song of Moses and the Lamb, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, than there is in the last, Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints? Thus he that is justified in the Spirit appears to be God; but nevertheless this is a MYSTERY that man's wisdom teaches not.

S E R M.
XIX.

xv. 3.



S E R M O N XX.

V.  HIS, as well as the former branch of our religion, comes within the character that's given of the whole, that it is a mystery of godliness; which I shall consider in both the parts of it: First, shew that it is a mystery, and only to be understood by the light that comes from above; and secondly, that it prepares and leads to godliness; it animates and guides our practice, and helps us to do God's will, as well as to receive his word.

S E R M.
XX.
Jan. 18th,
1718-19.

I. 'Tis a thing MYSTERIOUS in its own nature, that he who was manifest in the flesh should be justified in the Spirit. There's a great deal that humane reason will have to object against it; nor can it be known any other way, than by the revelation that God has given us in his word. From those writings alone shall I endeavour to lay it before you; for, I am sure, that book is our only rule, in

S E R M. following the work of the Spirit upon the souls of
 XX. men: the descriptions we meet with in the Bible
 Rom. vi. have their counterpart in the experience of a be-
 17. liever. *You obey from the heart the form of doctrine,*
εἰς ὃν παραδόθητε, into which you are deliver'd.

Now that the great Saviour of the world should be justified in the Spirit is a mystery, as you will see by the consideration of these particulars. 1. 'Tis strange, that he should carry on his design by dying, which seems to be the way of losing it. 2. 'Tis mysterious, that he should be own'd by the Father at the time that we thought him forsaken. 3. 'Tis more a wonder, that the thing which seem'd to hinder the faith of men should afterwards encourage it. 4. 'Tis again a mystery, that he who appear'd at his death as if he was entirely in the enemies hands, should so soon after declare his own power at the resurrection. 5. The manner of the Spirit's justifying him in the soul that was fill'd with prejudice against him is very mysterious. 6. The success of this work in the heart of a believer, its victory over all opposition, and its perseverance to the end, makes another part of this wonder.

1. One testimony given to our blessed Lord was concerning his death; and you may look upon it as a mystery, that he should take such a way to carry on his design, as all mankind imagin'd would be fatal to it. *The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; and yet the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God stronger than men.* He appears as the captain of our salvation. As God laid help upon him, so we are told that *he is mighty to save.* Tho' he was promis'd as the seed of the woman in the early voice of the Gospel, to signify the weakness and frailty of the nature that he took upon him; yet it was then affirm'd, that he should break the serpent's head. And what could we expect from such a promise, but that

Cor. i.
25.

Genes. iii.
15.

that he would make the clouds his chariot, and ^{S E R M.} come attended with the armies of heaven, that it ^{XX.} might be said, as it us'd to be, *Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctua-* ^{Psal. xcvi. 6.} ry? That he should put on righteousness as a breast- ^{Ila. lix. 17.} plate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head, the garments of vengeance for clothing, and be clad with zeal as a cloke?

But when he became in all things like unto his ^{Heb. ii. 14, 15.} brethren, it was, that thro' death he might subdue him that has the power of death, that is, the devil; and so deliver them who thro' fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. The rescue that he determin'd to give his people from their greatest enemy and their darkest fears, was noble, divine, and worthy of himself; but the way that he took to do it is what no wisdom of man would have found out: That falling by Satan should be triumphing over him, that losing his forces should be getting the battle, is a strange way of conquering. 'Tis said of the Devil, that he had the power of death; and if a Redeemer was stronger than he, we should have thought he would spoil his armour, and take from him that wherein he trusted, and let it be seen that he should no longer have the command of such an important evil: And therefore if, in this battel, he that undertook to deliver us should not be able to save himself, we could have nothing to admire in him but his good wishes, and bewail the miscarriage of a gracious purpose. Upon his own dying we must conclude, that he who had the power of death had obtain'd power over him; nor does he seem to deny it, as he saith to the Jews, *this is your hour, and the power of darkness*; i. e. now the combination of hell and earth against me will succeed.

And yet by falling he conquer'd, by dying he liv'd, and gave success to the great design which

S E R M. his enemies thought was lost: for, tho' he was
 XX. crucified thro' weakness, yet he lives by the power of
 God. 'Tis thus that he deliver'd his people, not
 only from their real danger, but the terrible ap-
 prehensions they have of it, that *fear of death thro'*
which they are all their life-time subject to bondage.
 This he did by his own death. 'Tis strange, that
 his dying under so much darkness and horror,
 should be a means to make it easier for us; that,
 because he cried after a departed God, and bore the
 weight of an avenging law, that therefore our fears
 should be over; and yet in this he is justified by
 the Spirit. The ways he took to bring about the
 great salvation were rightly chosen, and effectual
 to all the benefits that he had in his view: *For this*
 Heb. ix. *cause he is the Mediator of the new Testament, that*
 15. *by means of death they who are call'd may receive the*
promise of eternal inheritance.

2. 'Tis a mystery that he should be own'd by
 the Father, at the same time that he thought him-
 self forsaken: it us'd to support him under all the
 sufferings of life, that *he who sent him was with*
 Joh. viii. *him, the Father had not left him alone.* So he could
 29. tell his Disciples, *The hour comes when ye shall be*
 xvi. 32. *scatter'd every man to his own, and leave me alone;*
yet am I not alone, but the Father that sent me is
with me. He could say over the grave of Lazarus,
 xi. 41. *I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I know*
that thou hearest me always. But this Divine Pre-
 sence, or at least the delightful sensations that at-
 tended it, this that had been his perpetual security,
 was to fail him at last; and he who had so often
 profess'd his assurance of the Father's care, must
 cry out upon the cross, *My God, my God, why hast*
thou forsaken me?

The passage is taken out of the xxiii^d Psalm,
 which is directed to the chief musician upon
Aijeleth Shahar, i. e. the hind of the morning; and
 it

it seems to bear this allusion, that the person whose miseries are there describ'd was like a chased hart, almost run down, gasping, fainting, without any dawn of help from the whole creation. Like a creature so deadrun does he represent his own case, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* The compellation is very moving: he pleads a propriety in God; he repeats it, *My God, my God; q. d. I am certainly Thine, and more Thine than any one else can be, and yet Thou hast forsaken me.* The Psalmist pursues the meditation: *Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry unto thee in the day-time, and thou hearest not, and in the night season I am not silent.* As the lamentation stands here at large, we must take it for the anguish of his soul, under a sense of the Father's departure from him: and by the vehemence with which it is repeated, we may suppose it continu'd for some time.

And yet, *even then*, the Father did own him in the most effectual way: that is, he receiv'd the offering that Christ made of himself. He was then a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour: he had a joy set before him: there was a Divine influence upon every groan: for thro' the eternal Spirit he offer'd himself without spot to God. Here then is a mystery, that the Father should be present with him, when himself complains that he had forsaken him. Had God indeed withdrawn from him, and not accepted an offering at his hand, all those torments had been in vain, and the blood of the covenant prov'd no better than an unholy thing. But in the hour of his distress, when it pleas'd the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief, he was then the dearest to Divine Justice; as by those agonies he brought in a righteousness for his own glory, and our acceptance. He was then doing the most desirable service to the holiness of God, shedding a blood

S E R M.
XX.

Psal. xxii.
1, 2.

Eph. v. 2.
Heb. xii. 2.
Heb. ix.
14

Isa. liii.
10.

S E R M. that should purifie heaven itself, and make ready
 XX. a numerous people to inhabit it : *The heavenly things*
 Heb. ix. *themselves were purified with this better sacrifice ; and*
 23. *thro' the blood of the everlasting covenant was the*
 xiii. 20. *great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the*
dead.

3. Another mystery is this, that the very thing
 which seem'd to hinder the faith of men, should
 afterwards encourage it : I mean, the death of our
 blessed Lord. Whenever he spoke of this, tho' at
 a distance, there went off a great shoal of profe-
 lytes ; nay, the very twelve us'd to be shock'd at
 it. They rebuk'd him for it, they mourn'd over
 Joh. xvi. it, *sorrow fill'd their hearts*, and became unweildy
 6. to 'em. When the time came on that he must be
 deliver'd up, they forsook him, and fled away.
 They could not endure the thoughts of the cross :
 Mat. xxvi. *All of 'em were offended because of him that night ;*
 31. *the Shepherd was smitten, and the sheep of the flock*
scatter'd abroad. And would not every one ima-
 gine that a circumstance so frightful beforehand,
 should be scandalous afterwards ? that they would
 never allow themselves to remember the vile way
 in which their Saviour died.

But, instead of that, they make no secret of it ;
 they mention the ill usage he had from the Jews
 with satisfaction : *The offence of the cross had ceas'd.*
 Joh. xx. 'Tis observ'd, that as he shew'd 'em his hands
 20. *and his feet, then were the Disciples glad when they*
saw the Lord. And tho' Thomas did not believe,
 yet his unbelief turns quite another way than it
 us'd to do. He is so far from being terrified with
 the thoughts of our Lord's dying upon the cross,
 ver. 25. that he rather makes it a condition : *Except I see*
the print of the nails, and thrust my fingers into his
side, I will not believe. And the rest made no se-
 cret of it, that their chief priests and rulers deliver'd
 him to be condemn'd to death. Might it not have
 been

been expected, that the *Jews* would give out that S E R M. XX.
as a reproach to the whole party: These are the Disciples of him that was crucified, and insult their faith with the scandalous death of their master? And the people who were afraid to see him die, could not be the most prepar'd to stand this banter. But it prov'd quite otherwise with 'em: they own'd all this in their argument: *The God of our Fathers rais'd up Jesus, whom ye slew and hang'd on a tree.* Before this, their eyes were blinded; they could not see that such a form of death was describ'd in any of the Prophets: but it was no longer a stumbling-block to 'em after the resurrection, as *Paul and Barnabas* told the *Jews* at *Antioch*: *They that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew not him, nor yet the voices of the Prophets that are read every sabbath day, have fulfill'd them in condemning him: And tho' they found no cause of death in him, yet desir'd they Pilate that he should be slain. And when they had fulfill'd all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre.* Acts v. 30; xiii. 27; 28, 29;

This was so far from being the matter of their concern or shame, that the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, he determin'd to know nothing among 'em 1 Cor. ii. 2.
save *Jesus Christ, and him crucified.* And, as to his own practice, he durst not glory in any thing Gal. vi. 14;
but the cross of Christ, whereby the world was crucified to him, and he to the world. This preaching of the cross was to them that perish foolishness. The *Jews* made it a stumbling-block, and the *Greeks* entertain'd it with contempt; but to them that are 1 Cor. i. 24.
saved, both *Jews* and *Greeks*, Christ, as so crucified, was the wisdom of God, and the power of God. You will easily conceive, that when they us'd to tell mankind of a Redeemer who was capable of saving 'em, and gave 'em a long account of the miracles that he wrought, and especially when they themselves

S E R M. selves did wonders in his name, it would raise the
 XX. expectations of the people. But when they came
 to that part of the story, that this Almighty Lord
 was crucified, that he, who brings others to glory,
 fell himself with shame and torment, it could not fail to
 startle all that heard it. We should have thought that
 branch of the report had better have been left out.

But it was *this* that drew such vast numbers after him. *Nicodemus* was a Disciple of Jesus, but he durst not make a public profession. That which brought him first to our Lord, was the miracles that he wrought: *No man can do the things that thou doest, except God be with him.* Now, who could think that such a one should take courage at the death of Christ? and yet he comes with a great provision of sweet spices to anoint his body. Nay, *Joseph of Arimathea*, who was a Disciple secretly for fear of the Jews, begins to open his profession when we should have thought it was time to close it: *He went boldly to Pilate, and beg'd the body, and put it into his own new tomb.* The Scripture was indeed fulfill'd, that the Shepherd should be smitten, and the sheep scatter'd; and so they were for a time; but those fears gave way, and that little flock that us'd to run as far as they could from danger, now can meet it all. *They rejoic'd that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name, and daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.*

4. 'Tis still further a mystery that he who appear'd at his death, as if he was entirely in the enemies hands, should soon after declare *his own power* at the resurrection. They took him and hal'd him from one to another; from *Pilate* to *Herod*, and from *Herod* to *Pilate*. He is abus'd by the soldiers, insulted by the rabble, and pursu'd with

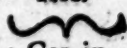
with a charge of capital crimes by the priests: S E R M. XX.
 they put upon him what vesture they please, and
 make a jest of his authority by the purple robe:
 they expose him by a crown of thorns; they lay
 upon him the whole weight of his cross, which
 was a burthen too heavy for him to bear: they
 nailed him to it, *they pierc'd his hands and his feet*;
 and it seems altogether at their own choice, whe-
 ther they will break his bones or no. Tho' there
 was a secret design of God which protected him
 from that, yet it's more than they knew. They
 give him vinegar to drink, they open his side with
 a spear, and in short do what they please. Never
 did a Person seem to be less at his own dispo-
 sal; *a worm, and no man. He is led as a lamb to* PL. xxii. 6.
the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers is Isa. liii. 7.
dumb, so he open'd not his mouth. They took him
 down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulchre,
 saith the Apostle, *i. e. Pilate gave leave for Joseph*
to do it; and yet after this, he made it very evi-
dent they had no more to do with him.

Now, who could believe it of a Person so help-
 less and passive, that in the space of three days no
 guards could secure him? that He, who had never
 an Angel to protect him from death, should have
 their united assistance at the resurrection? *He loos'd* Acts ii. 23.
the pains of death, it not being possible that he should
be holden of it. How is this conceivable of One
 that died? Why could not he lie in the grave,
 who had already suffer'd on the cross? Why must
 not that body see corruption which had felt the sor-
 rows of death? We should have thought, that
 preventing those pains of death would have declar'd
 his Majesty more than loosing 'em afterwards. The
 Jews begun to mutter a peevish argument upon
 Lazarus's death: *Why could not this man who open'd* Joh. xi 37.
the eyes of the blind, have caus'd that even this man
should not have died? And such sort of thoughts
 are

S E R M. are apt to rise in the carnal mind: Why was there
 XX. so very little of his power shewn before, and so
 much afterwards?

Now, the Spirit makes this mystery fit easie upon the believer: we are convinc'd, that such a forlorn and helpless way of dying, answer'd the great atonement, that he was to make; and that it became him, who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, to be declared the Son of God with power, by the Spirit of holiness, in the resurrection from the dead. It is evident from the whole, that the contrivance is all divine. We should never have laid matters together that way, but made his Majesty more uniform and continued. However, thus it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect thro' his sufferings.

5. The manner of the Spirit's justifying Christ in a soul that was fill'd with prejudice against him, is very mysterious. The Apostle has observ'd with a great deal of justice, that by nature we are children of wrath, as appears by our having a conversation among them, and fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, and of the mind. These lusts of the mind are what he calls in another place strong holds, and imaginations, and high thoughts, that exalt themselves against the knowledge of Christ. Our Saviour intimates the difficulty of the case, when he saith, Blessed is he whoever shall not be offended in me. He knew that as Satan was his enemy, so there was a great deal that he both might and would throw into the imaginations of the world. We may say, Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? The carnal mind is most certainly enmity against God, and does not know the things of God; nay they are foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned. 'Tis no wonder,

der if our Gospel be hid to them that are lost, in whom S E R M.
the God of this world blinds the eyes of them that be- XX.
lieve not. 

And what is it that gives the ministers of the
word success, and makes 'em a favour of God in
them that believe? I answer, *God makes us able mi-* 2 Cor. iv.
3. 4.
nisters of the new Testament; not of the letter, but of
the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
Our sufficiency is of him; but how shall we describe
it? Is it not mysterious that all those reasonings
which seem so very strong and clear, are gone as
the morning cloud, and lick'd up as the early dew?
and that, not in the way that we should have ex- iii. 6, 7.
pected? Perhaps an unbeliever stands it out against
the most powerful arguments; none of these can
reach him, and yet at last he falls, as *Ahab* did,
by a bow drawn at a venture, and an arrow that
comes in at the joints of the harness, without any
aim in him that shot it.

Thus we have sometimes known, that a plain
practical sermon has done more to convince a soul
of reveal'd religion, than all the disputations that
have been labour'd with art and zeal. You will
seldom meet with an argument better turn'd than
that which the poor man us'd when our Lord had
given him his sight, and yet we do not find that
it did any manner of good. When the Pharisees
tell him, that this Jesus is a *sinner*, he puts by that
blow, *Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one* Joh. ix:
24, 25.
thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.
They rally him again: *We know that God spake to* ver. 29.
Moses, as for this fellow, we know not from whence 30.
he is: And his answer is as short: *Herein is a*
marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is,
and yet he has open'd my eyes. But notwithstanding
the clearness of the argument, and the honest
way that the poor man had of working it, there's
never a Pharisee convinc'd, nor are his own parents
persuaded;

S E R M. persuaded; for the fear of excommunication makes
 XX. 'em not dare tell a plain story, how their son who
 was born blind came now to see.

- And yet we find what a run the conviction had afterwards, when we should have thought it was too late to expect any thing of that nature. At the day of Pentecost the Spirit is pour'd out. Peter explains that dispensation: tells 'em, that *Jesus of Nazareth was a man approv'd of God among 'em, by signs, and miracles, and wonders that God did by him in the midst of them, as they also knew.* He then goes on with an account of his resurrection, and
- ver. 36. concludes upon the whole, *Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that this same Jesus whom ye have crucified, has God made both Lord and Christ.* Now, tho' this is no more than what they might have been told several times, yet it's like the rising of the sun, all darkness flies before it. And the change begins in the conscience. 'Twas not merely the removing of a mistake, or an error, but they speak of it as a practical matter; *They were prick'd in their hearts, and said to Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Thus the Spirit convinc'd 'em of sin, because they believ'd not in Christ. These profelytes are worth having; and if the work does not take hold here, it signifies nothing. There's a great deal of difference between a man's being able to prove the Divine Nature and credentials of a Messiah, and his coming to him as his own Saviour. That was the
- ver. 41. case with these *Jews: they gladly receiv'd the word and were baptiz'd; and the same day there were added to 'em about three thousand souls.*

And so it is in our day: there needs no more to remove the arguments that are brought against the christian religion, than for people to be awaken'd into a concern about eternity. The complaint against the Apostles at *Philippi* was, *That these*

men being Jews, did exceedingly trouble the city; but when the jailor cries out, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* they bid him believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and he rejoyc'd, believing in God with all his house. He that feels the corruption of his nature, and knows himself to be undone, will no longer make a jest of being found in the righteousness of another. The method of justification by faith may well be the contempt of those who know no danger from sin: it's like sending a physician to a man in health. But all the critical learning, the nice reasoning, the free ways of thinking, make room when conscience tells the soul that He who saves him is Jehovah our righteousness. It will be with them as it was with the Apostle, *The things that were gain to me, I found to be loss; yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffer'd the loss of all things, and do count 'em but dung that I may win Christ.* I do count 'em but *σκυλακα* dogs-meat, fitter for them than for me: he had lost his taste and relish of that which he us'd to admire. This will be more evident from the next head.

S E R M.

XX.

xvi. 20.

ver. 30,

31.

Phil. iii. 7;

8.

Rom. xv.

13.

Mar. iv.

26, 27.

Psal. xc. 3.

Cant. i. 4.

6. The success of this work in the heart of a believer: When the Spirit has justified Christ in the manner I have told you, the conviction proclaims itself; it's like the sun that appears in its own evidence: *The God of hope fills 'em with all joy and hope in believing.* This is a mystery to the Christian himself, and may well be so to others. He knows not how to believe the very change that he feels. 'Tis like seed in the ground, which, whilst the man sleeps and rises night and day, springs and grows up he knows not how. Here's no force upon his will, and yet he feels something that is irresistible, a day of God's power. He is drawn, and yet he runs. Here's a necessity upon him,

U

you

S E R M. you must not say he is dragg'd along with it. He
 XX. makes a free choice, he *would not* do otherwise,
 and yet in some sense, he *cannot* do otherwise.

How soon was the turn given to *Saul*? he cries
 Acts ix. out, *Who art thou, Lord?* and presently after, *Lord,*
 5. 6. *what wilt thou have me to do?* Here's no time tak-
 en to unravel the prejudice that was so entangled.

Gal. i. 14. He had profited in the Jewish religion above many his
 15. 16. equals in his own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his Fathers: but when it pleas'd God to reveal his Son in him, that he might preach him among the Gentiles, he conferred not with flesh and blood. We should have thought, there must have been a gradual recovery to shew him, here a little, and there a little, the mistake of his former arguments. He must see by degrees, that the Messiah was to come out of *Nazareth*, and not have an earthly power. Now, this is done all at once; all the lectures of the Pharisees are answer'd in a moment: *They that heard him were amaz'd, and said, Is not this he who destroy'd them that call'd on this name at Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?* This remark they make upon his preaching straightway in the synagogues, that *Christ is the Son of God*: nay, the work was a mystery to the Disciples themselves, first at *Damascus*, and afterwards at *Jerusalem*: for, saith he, *I was unknown by face unto the churches at Judea that were in Christ, only they heard that he who persecuted us in times past, now preaches the faith that he once destroy'd, and they glorified God in me.*

You may take a short APPLICATION of what you have heard.

1. If the justification of Christ in the Spirit is such a mystery, it's no wonder that the honour of
 1 Cor. xii. our Lord is so much struck at: *No man can say*
 3. *that Jesus is Lord but by the holy Ghost.* And therefore

fore when we see men do despite to the Spirit of S E R M. XX.
 grace, when they take all the pains they can to stifle every thought of practical religion, when they represent the fears of persons about their own salvation as so many whims, and the comforts of the Spirit as a delusion; in a word, when they give up themselves to sensuality, and treat with scorn those that will not run to the same excess of riot, these are enemies to the holy Ghost, and in open war against him. And is it likely that he should teach those persons the *doctrines* of religion, who would never learn of him the *practice*? How should it be thought that a drunkard, a sabbath-breaker, or one that wanders out of the way of understanding is taught of God? Now, is it likely that men who live as without a God in the world, with no prayer in their families, no conversation with their Bibles, should be the best masters of argument about the deep mysteries of godliness? To suppose that God makes them wise, is to suppose that he steps out of his way, and works without the use of means, that he imparts of his treasures to an enemy, and furnishes a weapon against himself: no, he rather gives over those, that do not like to retain him in their knowledge, to a reprobate mind. To the unbelieving nothing is pure, but the mind and conscience are defiled. They profess to know God, but in works deny him, being abominable, disobedient, and to every good work reprobate. When persons are more in Saul's first inquiry, *Who art thou, Lord?* than in the second, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* there's not much to be expected from such as these; and to imagine that the truth is in their souls, is to suppose that God throws his pearls into a dunghil. We are told of mockers who walk after their own ungodly lusts; These be they that separate themselves, sensual, and having not the Spirit.

Rom. i. 28.

Tit. i. 15; 16.

Jude 18; 19.

SERM.

XXI.

2. This shews us how vain all the ways of promoting the knowledge of Christ will be that are not agreeable to the Spirit. We may see how little can be expected in defence of the Doctrine from a party of men, who have done all they could to abuse the work of the Spirit both in the ordinances of the Gospel, and the souls of believers. Tho' *praying by the Spirit* is so often mention'd in Scripture, yet the language is become a jest, and a man will be laugh'd at if he does but name it: and this not only by a noisy multitude, but such as pretend to know better. And are these the men from whom we are to have the truth as it is in Jesus? who have set up their own fancies above the divine institutions, and lay as great a weight upon an opinion that never was reveal'd, as they can upon that which is? of which we have a notorious instance in an author, who in his book against the *Deists*, proves that Jesus must be the Messiah from the miracles that he wrought, and that these were done in a public way, and that our evidence of this is by a succession of Bishops from the Apostles; which is laying the most important affair upon the greatest uncertainty in the world.



Feb. 1.
1718-19.

SERMON XXI.

2.



HIS branch of our religion is proper to animate the whole duty of life. When he who was manifest in the flesh is justified in the Spirit, when God reveals his Son in us as an all-sufficient

Saviour, it does not only fill us with a holy wonder, but it makes us abound in the work of the Lord: *We follow after, that we may apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus.* S E R M.
XXI.
Phil. iii.
12.

You will see that it is a *mystery of GODLINESS*, by considering the influence it has upon the following principles: Our reverence to God, our care to please him, the humble thoughts we should have of ourselves, our charity to others, the peace and hope that runs thro' our lives, and our preparation for a dying hour. These are the chief articles of practical piety, and whatever promotes them must be of the best importance. Now, you will find that the testimony which the holy Spirit gives in our souls to the character, the capacity and goodness of a Redeemer, will do us service in all the variety that I have mention'd.

1. By this we learn to approach with reverence to him with whom we have to do. This is a tribute to God's majesty; but yet it has the best directions from his goodness: nor can it be maintain'd without some hopes of an interest in him, and a conviction of *the forgiveness* and mercy that *is with him*. The Devils have it not; they behold and feel his greatness, and *the power of his anger; for according to his fear, so is his wrath*; but this is no devotional temper. Tho' they *believe and tremble*, they cannot come before him with the spirit of sons; and therefore the fear, that the people of God are conducted by, is distinguish'd from theirs. 'Tis call'd a *godly fear*; and the ground upon which it is rais'd is a covenant where the Devils have no lot or portion: *We, having receiv'd a kingdom that cannot be mov'd, have grace to serve God acceptably with reverence and a godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire.* Where you find by the turn of the argument, that tho' the religion of a good man falls under the influence of God's Majesty,

S E R M. *jefty, and looks upon him as a consuming fire, yet*
 XXI. *at the same time it is enliven'd by the thoughts of*
 what his mercy has done in and thro' a Redeemer.

Heb. iv. Thus the Apostle argues, that *all things are naked,*
 13. 14. *and open'd to the eyes of him with whom we have to*
do. Seeing then that we have a great high Priest that
is pass'd into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let
us hold fast our profession. When the holy Spirit
 does his office in glorifying the Son, by taking of
 his, and shewing them unto us, he commands every
 loose and idle thought. This being the King
 who sits upon the holy hill of Sion, we are to

Psal. ii. 6. *serve him with fear, and rejoyce with trembling.*

11. Tho' 'tis a common objection against the doctrine of free grace, that it teaches people an unbecoming boldness to their Maker; yet I believe the experience of every Christian tells him quite the contrary. *There's forgiveness with thee,* saith the Psalmist, *that thou may'st be feared.* God never appear'd so great to his soul, as when the view was taken under that character: *With the Lord there is mercy, and with our God is plenteous redemption.* So it is promis'd, when a Redeemer comes to be better

Hos. iii. 5. *known, that the children of Israel should seek the*
Lord their God, and David their king, and they shall
fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days. 'Tis

Eph. ii. 12. *apparent to all observation, that they who are stran-*
gers to the commonwealth of Israel, and aliens to the
covenant of promise, who have no hope, are persons
that live as without a God in the world.

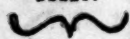
Now, the reverence that fills our minds to Him whose we are, and whom we serve, comes by faith in a Saviour: *We call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work,*
 17. 18. *and so pass the time of our sojourning here in fear:*
 19. *Forasmuch as we know that our redemption is by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot.* You see in what method the

work goes on, *Psal. lxxxix. 1. I will sing of the faithful-
fulness of the Lord: I said mercy shall be built up
for ever: thy faithfulness hast thou establish'd in the
very heavens: and from hence they conclude, that
great fear is due to the Lord in the assembly of his
Saints, and he is to be had in reverence of those
that are about him.* S E R M.
XXI.
ver. 2.
ver. 7.

How different was the temper of *Saul*, after Christ had reveal'd himself to him, from what it had been before? and yet, he never liv'd loose from all professions of duty, as you may safely imagine, because he was blameless touching the righteousness that is in the law. But when he found the necessity of looking to God in and thro' a Redeemer, he stood *trembling and astonish'd*: his heart was more bow'd to the divine will than ever it had been. And indeed there are no discoveries in which the greatness of a God does more appear than those that belong to our salvation. When *Isaiah* saw the glory of a Redeemer, and spake of him, as *sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, with his train filling the temple; the house was clouded with smoke, the posts of the door shake at the voice of him that spake.* And the prophet himself, who must be glad at the vision, (yet he) is bore down with the magnificence of the mercy, and cries out, *Woe is me, for I am undone!* He cries out undone at the sight of that which sav'd him. 'Tis not the language of despair: the only meaning of the words is, that the glory of the design was too much for him. There was something so great in this revelation of the Divine mercy, that makes him more apprehensive than he ever had been, that he was *a man of unclean lips.* What was it that he saw of a Saviour then? for the Evangelist tells us, that *he saw HIS glory, and spake of HIM.* Under what title? that which belongs to none but the most High, *the King, the Lord of Hosts,* Acts ix. 6.
Isa. vi. 1,
2, 5.
Joh. xii.
41.

S E R M.

XXI.



Pf. lxxxix.

8.

Gen.

xxviii.

12, 13,

15.

ver. 16,

17.

And so it will be with us. We cannot believe the sufficiency of a Mediator to save us, but at that very moment we are astonish'd at his perfections: *O Lord of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee? As Jacob in his dream or vision saw a ladder that kept the correspondence open between earth and heaven, the Lord Redeemer was at the top of it, and tells him what concern'd his happiness rather than his devotion: I am the God of thy father, and will give thee the land whereon thou liest: I will be with thee in the way that thou goest, and will bring thee back in peace.* He is struck with the discovery, and feels other impressions besides those of joy: *How fearful is this place! Surely the Lord was in this place, and I knew it not: This is no other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*

2. If God is justified in our spirits, it will fill us with a care to please him. 'Tis very hard for me to set those bounds that some people speak of between the duty that is owing to the Father, and that which is claim'd by the Son. If the one is only a creature, no brightness or perfection can make his distance from the other any less than infinite; and therefore he is by no means to have the homage that is due alone to the Divine Nature. Such a worship as that would be idolatry. May we not therefore look for plain distinctions to settle our carriage to the Father and the Son, that the Gospel may not betray us into that very crime that was so abominable under the Law? The God who is so jealous of his honour, and told his people that they should not bow down to *the likeness of any thing in heaven or earth, or under the earth; that they should have no other God before him*, has certainly left us under no snare, by any unguarded direction in the New Testament. One of the last orders there, is from the Angel who would not suffer

a Mystery of GODLINESS. 297

suffer the Apostle to fall down before him, but SERM.
XXI.
bids him *worship God*.

Sometimes indeed God joins himself with another, and tells us, in the same word, of the duty that we owe to both; but there the case is so plain, that we are in no danger of mistaking. As when it is said, the children of *Israel believed the Lord and his servant Moses*, we must of necessity understand it of a different faith. So when *David* saith to *Abigail*, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou*. Tho' he uses the same word in all the three parts of his declaration, yet it cannot possibly be taken in less than three senses. So again, when we are bid to *fear the Lord and the king*, can any mortal suppose it is with the same fear? Indeed I should not have mention'd this text as an instance, because it has suffer'd by the blasphemous cant of mercenary tongues, who have made a horrid prostitution of their ministerial character. The Apostle saith of the *Macedonians*, that they *gave up themselves to the Lord, and to us by the will of God*. The expression must have two meanings. In these places, and several others, the same word is to be taken in various senses.

But this will by no means be our protection from running into idolatry, if he who was manifest in the flesh is *not God over all blessed for evermore*. The Scripture has not done as the Angel did at Mount *Sinai*, set guards about the Divine honour: He is all along represented as partner in it: *You believe in God, believe also in me*. I don't deny but a minister, a good man, and especially an Angel, may use those words, that if ye believe in God, believe that I am sent by him: but can any serious person think, that when Christ said it to his drooping disciples, that it meant no more as it came out of his mouth, than it would out of theirs?

Hg

S E R M. He brings it in as an argument, that their hearts
XXI. *should not be troubled.*

Joh. v. 23. And so, that passage, *That all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father, he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father who has sent him.* 'Tis

a very short answer that the word *As* does not signifie equality; for which we have this instance given, *As my Father has sent me, so send I you:* for according to that interpretation, Christ then saith no more of himself than what any preacher or believer upon earth may say, That all men are to honour a minister who comes in the name of God, *as* they honour the Father that sent him; and he that honours the one, honours the other. Tho' the words may be twin'd and bended into a good humble sense, yet how do you imagine they would sound? Can the phrase of honouring the Son *as* we honour the Father, mean no more than a similitude, as it may do if applied to an Angel or a man? Are we to take the word in this place as we do in others? How comes that then to be given as the reason of it, that *as the Father raises up the dead, and quickens 'em, so the Son quickens whom he will: That the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father?* Can any one imagine, that the manner of the expression is the same here, with that which it is compar'd to: *As the Father sends me, so send I you?*

1 Cor. xiv. 9. we can prove out of the Bible: *Except we utter by the tongue words easie to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken, for we shall speak into the air?*

If I may be allow'd to expound these Scriptures that give us the titles of the Father, in the way that

that is us'd with those that lay down the very same E R M.
 words of the Son, we shall not have one text left XXI.
 to prove a God at all. As for example, when we
 read of our Mediator, that he is call'd *the mighty* Iſa. ix. 6.
God, the force of the argument is taken off with
 this, that the name *may* be given to a creature.
 Why may not an Atheist use the same liberty with
 one text, as these do with another, and tell us as
 roundly, that those words, *Pſal. 1. The mighty God,*
even the Lord has spoken and call'd the earth from
the rising of the Sun, are to be understood of a king
 or an Angel? And farther, when it is said of
 Christ, that he shall be call'd *the everlasting Father*, Mic. v. 2.
 and that *his goings forth have been of old from ever-*
lasting, may you not put the same unglorious limi-
 tations upon the title that is given to God, when
 he is said to be *the ancient of days*? 'Tis true, the Dan. vii.
 word everlasting is us'd of creatures, and there it 13.
 must be taken in a narrower sense. But if that is
 the reason why it is to be so understood when ap-
 plied to Christ, another sett of people may with the
 same assurance say that it means no more when we
 read that *from everlasting to everlasting Thou art* Pſ. xc. 2.
God.

What ground have we to imagine when the
 Apostle saith, *I am not without law to God, but un-* 1 Cor. ix.
der the law to Christ, that we are to distinguish up- 21.
 on his words, as we do between fearing God and
 the king? At his conversion he cries out, *Who art*
thou, Lord? And when he knew it was no other
 than Jesus of Nazareth, he nevertheless enquires of
 him, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* and yet Acts xxiv.
 it is certain, that he worship'd no other than *the* 14.
God of his fathers. He tells us, that *whether we* Rom. xiv.
live, we live unto the Lord, or whether we die, we die 8.
unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die we
are the Lord's. What Lord is this? You will see
 in the next words; *For to this end Christ both died,* ver. 9. 10,
 and 11, 12.

SER M. and rose, and reviv'd, that HE might be the Lord
 XXI. both of dead and living. And, We must all stand before the judgment seat of CHRIST, because it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to ME, and every tongue shall confess to GOD; so then every one of us shall give an account of himself to GOD.

Will it not be very hard for an honest humble Christian, who has had no education, or opportunity to be master of critical learning, (I say, will it not be hard upon him) to read exactly the same things demanded by the Father and the Son, and be told that one of 'em is but a creature? He thinks it is his God that speaks: *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee.* The same Lord upon whom men began to call so long ago. Now, what way can such a one have to divest the word of the same sense, when he reads of people in every place calling upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours? So when we are told, that he that is call'd in the Lord, being a servant, is the LORD's freeman, likewise he that is call'd being free, is CHRIST's servant. It may be answer'd, that this is a profession we make to creatures, and a relation that we come into with men. Well, its true; but one would imagine, that tho' the word is so us'd in other places, it cannot be in this, because the very next verse gives a reason for it; *Ye are bought with a price, be ye not servants of men:* and therefore we are Christ's servants, in a way that we cannot be theirs. I durst not say as David did to any other than God, *Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant.* Thus does the Spirit justify him who was manifest in the flesh; he fills us with a desire to please him; we are his people, and are made willing in the day of his power: *We worship Him in the beauty of holiness: He is your Lord, and therefore worship you him.*

3. This

3. This gives us humble thoughts of ourselves. S E R M. XXI.
 Nothing shews the vileness of humane nature so much as the dispensation of the Gospel: *Boasting is excluded, not by the law of works, but by the law of faith.* Rom. iii. 27. The excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, makes the principles we us'd to value no more than loss, and no better than dung. Phil. iii. 8;
 The dearer Christ is to my soul, the viler shall I be to myself. Thus the Apostle after he was illuminated tells us, he was *not meet* to be call'd by that name: That to him, who was less than the least of all Saints, was this grace given that he should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God. As you heard under the former head, the prophet cries out undone: Why? because he was a man of unclean lips, and dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips. Did he never feel that conviction before? yes surely; but it never came with that power upon his mind as when he stood in the contemplation of a Saviour. And it was the glory of his Person, as well as the design of his grace and love, that had made this impression: *Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.* He speaks of him under the same title that David gave him: *I will write of things touching the King.* 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9. Eph. iii. 8, 9. Ps. xlv. i.

'Tis true, the mere name proves no divinity, because it is given to creatures; but the question is, whether it can be understood of any less than a God here; for it is said of him, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* ver. 6. The church is consider'd as his spouse: *The King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* ver. 11. And within the compass of two verses, they are call'd *the King's daughter*; of whom nevertheless it is said, *she shall be brought unto the King.* Why is the same title given promiscuously to the Father and the Son,

S E R M Son, if we may not have it expounded here,
 XXI. as it is in other places, that *God is King of all*
 the earth, and a great King above all Gods. *Isaiah*
 xlvii. 7. was humbled in his own eyes, when he saw him
 xcv. 3. in that glory. 'Tis of him they speak in those
 Pl. xcix. 4. words, *The King's strength loves judgment, and in the*
song of the Lamb, just and true are all thy ways, thou
King of saints.

4. This inspires us with charity to others. That's one fruit of the humility I mentioned under the former head; for *only by pride comes contention, but with the lowly advis'd is wisdom*. Whether Christ is reveal'd in us or no, will appear as much in our temper as it does in our principles. A person may have clear notions about the Scripture doctrine, and a happy way of bringing 'em into light; but if he feels any thing of this upon his own soul, it will keep him from passion as much as it can do from error. A man that wrangles and behaves himself unseemly, may have the right of the argument; he may prove that *God was manifest in the flesh*; but such an one is no instance that ever he was *justified in the Spirit*. Whatever sentiments he has about the sufficiency of Christ's righteousness and the necessity of depending upon it, yet either he has had no experience of these things; 2 Pet. i. 8, or he has forgot it all. *If these things be in you*
 9. *and abound, you will neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purg'd from his old sins.*

I may look upon the person who denies the divinity of Christ to be in a mistake, and give him my reasons why I cannot come into his exposition of several Scriptures; but if I have felt *the power of that resurrection* for which I'm pleading, and *the fellowship of those sufferings* which I defend with my arguments,

arguments, and am conform'd to that death which I SER M. proclaim abroad, it will govern my temper, as well XXI. as direct my notions. I have reason to suspect whether my wisdom is pure, if it does not make me peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated. When Jam. iii. orthodoxy puts us upon reviling language and 17. cruel imprecations, we are only foaming out our own shame. There is nothing in truth that should make us behave our selves unseemly: If we cannot in meekness instruct those that oppose themselves, upon a peradventure, that God may give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth, we are not fit 2 Tim. ii; 24, 25; to be the servants of the Lord. Roughness and incivility is one way of answering a heretick, but it will tempt all mankind to think that we have got no other. I do not say, and I never thought it, that in the present awful controversy, which issues in no less than either denying the Lord that bought us, or worshipping and serving the creature equally with the Creator, that passion lay on one side of the question, and meekness on the other.

Knowledge puffs up, says the Apostle, even a knowledge of the truth; but if we have any experience upon our souls of what we are pleading for, it will have a great command over us. An awaken'd conscience will put you upon contending earnestly for the truth as it is in Jesus; but it will teach you at the same time to be gentle towards all men. Scolding is an evidence that a person comes rather for the plunder of the war, than the success of the cause.

Not that a peaceable temper makes us indifferent to the doctrines of the Gospel, no, far from it. I will suppose the case of an enlighten'd convert, that he approaches to Christ as the God whose throne is for ever and ever; that he depends upon him as having brought in an everlasting righteousness, and that he derives from him as the King of saints. These are

S E R M. are notions and principles that he will by no means
 XXI. part with; he finds his soul drawn out into the
 highest degrees of reverence to a Saviour. If his
 confidence is in Christ Jesus, 'tis from a belief that
 Isa. xlv. 2. he is the God whom *all the ends of the earth shall
 look to*; and if he is not God, the person is not
 only in an error, but he is struck off from his
 dependence, he dare not rely on him as the au-
 thor and finisher of his faith. Now if such a
 one comes into the argument, 'tis no wonder that
 he is tenacious of those principles that enter into
 his best devotion, and are the support of his great-
 est hopes; but he is too full of the mystery, to
 be capable of wrangling about it; it's too much
 his concern for that; none but people who feel a
 great deal less than he does, can treat the subject in
 such a manner. If the zeal and learning of other per-
 sons are oppos'd to him, and would take him off from
 the truth that he has received with love, *he'll hold
 fast his profession*; though perhaps he may not be an
 equal master of argument with those who have list-
 ed themselves in the cause, and devoted their whole
 study for several years to this controversy; yet
 he knows from within, *in whom he has believed*,
 and will not part with those principles upon which
 2 Tim. i. he thinks him *able to keep what he has committed to*
 12. *him against that day*.

Mr. Em-
 lyn's
 works,
 P. 58.

If I ever felt the power of Christ's resurrection,
 I can bear all the reproaches that we are like to
 meet with, and are flowing so fast upon us, on the
 account of our zeal for him. Of late we have been
 charg'd with *setting the Son above the Father*, which is
 an opinion I never so much as heard of, 'till I met
 with it in a printed accusation. And now we are
 laid under a new scandal, as being a people most
 inclin'd to persecution; and the principles that are
 suppos'd to lead us into it, are not those by which
 we have been distinguished, but what we have in
 common

common with the established Church. 'Tis not ^{S E R M.} our scrupling ceremonies, or an inequality in the ^{XXI.} office of the ministry, but it's our adherence to the doctrine of my text, that has laid us under these new slanders. *And these are not enemies that* ^{Psal. lv. 12,} *have reproached us, then we could have born it; nei-* ^{13, 14.} *ther is it they who profess'd to hate us, that have magnified themselves against us, then we could have hid our selves from them. But it is a man, a guide, an acquaintance, with whom we have taken sweet counsel, and walk'd to the house of God in company. Our* ^{1 Pet. iv.} *reproach is now for the name of Christ.* ^{14.}

If we do indeed maintain either this or any other cause with an ungodly rancour, it is wrong; the argument does not need it, and the Spirit of Christ will not bear it; *The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God.* But of this I'm sure, that there's no necessity of *speaking the truth* in any other way but that of *love*; and if ever any thing has dropt from my mouth unworthy of the charity which is the end of the commandment, I have done *that which I allow not*: For tho' there's none whom I more admire than Christ Jesus my Lord, yet there's nothing I more abhor than persecution in every form and shape: He needs none of my folly and corruption to promote his cause. The argument is certainly as good for *him* as it was for Baal; *if he be a God, he will plead for himself when one has cast down his altar.*

§. Another principle that the testimony of the Spirit has an influence upon, is that peace and hope that runs thro' the lives of believers. 'Tis in enmity to this, that Satan has rais'd such opposition to the doctrines of the Gospel. He grudges the Christian that serenity of mind which himself has lost. He would involve mankind in his own despair, and as *he is reserved in chains under darkness,*

S E R M. he would have them be so too. To that purpose
 XXI. he takes all imaginable pains, either to prevent this
 work of the Spirit in our souls, or to divert us
 from heeding it.

And one way is the method of the present controversy, which is, to demand an *explication* of what we confess to be *mysterious*: That is the way to ensnare our faith, and entangle our peace: As for example, when I'm enquir'd of, whether the Three that bear record in heaven are three Modes, Operations, or infinite Minds, these are words which the Scripture has not given me, and therefore I have nothing to say to them. If the question is, whether they are *Three*, I can answer, yes; If I am ask'd whether they are three *Gods*, I must say, no: But how they are three, and how they are one, I do not pretend to tell. The ways of expression that people have shewn their fondness to, and by which they have endeavour'd to make it intelligible, have been only so many vain plots against the mysteriousness of the doctrine, and these have prov'd temporary as they deserv'd to do. Creeds have expir'd, grown old, and been ready to vanish away: They change as ages do, but *the faith once delivered to the saints* is the same. Thus far the believer is at a point, that he knows upon what his hope is rais'd. These are principles, which, though he cannot explain, yet they are what his soul flees to; and as ridiculous as a mysterious doctrine may appear to others, 'tis a foundation of hope to him. *His heart is comforted to the riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

Col. ii. 2.

6. It prepares him for a dying hour; he dare trust his soul to the care of a Redeemer at last. *Lord Jesus receive my Spirit.* He looks to him

Acts vii.

as the *finisher* of this faith, and therefore his esteem for him must be equal to so great a dependence in the most important act of religion. Thus Christ is justified in the Spirit, and the reputation he has in the heart of a believer, agrees to his glory above, where he is *seen of Angels.*

S E R M.
XXI.



X 2

S E R



March 1. SERMON XXII.
1718-19.



1 Tim. III. 16.

— Seen of Angels —

SERM.
XXII.



Job
xxxviii.
7.

THIS is the third branch of a mystery great without controversy, and gives us a farther account of him who was *manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit.* That he is preach'd unto the Gentiles, and believed on in the world, shews us the empire that he has below; but his being seen of Angels is an argument of the glory that he is receiv'd into *above.* These are the highest order of the creation, the *morning stars; the sons of God* in a nobler sense of the word than can be affirm'd of our nature; and it declares to us the value of this great salvation, that those *thinking flames* should feel any concern about it. There are three reasons that would move us to suppose they had no lot or portion in this matter, and therefore

fore must no more regard it than they do the increase of the earth, the returns of spring and summer, and harvest, and winter, which is nothing to them, who live in a state of equal light and happiness.

S E R M.
XXII.

First, They have always continu'd in the perfection and purity of their creation, and therefore had no need of any redemption from God, or any reconciliation to him. It could not be said of them as it was of man, that the *Lord made 'em up-right, but they sought out many inventions.* *Secondly*, As the elect Angels never sinned, so those of that nature, who left their first habitation, were never to be saved; and therefore tho' the Son of God had a desire to the works of his hands, yet it was not to any of *their number.* *Thirdly*, As an evidence of this, that they were distinguish'd out of the case, when He came upon the grand expedition of his love, *He verily took not on him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham.* He declar'd, that his concern lay with those children that were *partakers of flesh and blood* by his own taking part of the same. He was (as no Angel ever had been) *made flesh, and dwelt among us.* They are neither in our number, nor in our neighbourhood. They don't come into this world in the way that he did, as inhabitants: A spirit has no flesh and bones, as the disciples saw him to have.

Eccles. vii.
29.

Heb. ii. 16.

Joh. i. 14.

And yet, tho' one would have thought these things might have carried off their regard from the work that he came about, and made 'em look upon the whole affair as what did not belong to them, you find their name is brought into this account of our great Redeemer: He was not only manifest in the flesh, and *in all things made like to his brethren*, as a merciful and a faithful High-priest, but he is *seen of Angels.* Theirs was a nature that he slid over, both in his humiliation and his advance-

S E R M. ment. You will find that their station was something that lay between the one and the other :
 XXII. For in order to the suffering of death, he was made *lower than the Angels*, and when he is received up into glory, he is made *so much better than the Angels*, as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they ; and yet you see they are brought into the account that we have of him, as admirers, if not gainers, by the purchase of his mercy, *He was seen of Angels*.

As this belongs to the mystery of godliness, so it contains in it something wonderful, and therefore we must look farther than the sound of the word. He was seen of men, and when *they saw him*,
 Isa. iii. 2. *there was no form or comeliness in him, that they should desire him*. He was seen of devils, one of 'em cried out, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God ; and therefore if that's all, that the Angels were among the spectators of his person and actions, it is not important enough to have a place in this text. There's no mystery in it. But the word must be taken in a larger view, as it comprehends their diligent attention to him their admiration and delight in him, and the pleasure with which they observ'd the glory of his merit, the success of his death, and the triumph of his resurrection. I shall proceed upon this head in the following method.

1. Enquire into the meaning of the phrase, what it was for Christ to be *seen of Angels*.

2. Shew that this belongs to him as GOD, for under that title we are carried thro' the whole account that is given of him. And,

3. That this is a *mystery*, one of the wonders of our Religion, and

4. That

Seen of Angels.

311

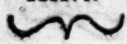
4. That it is a mystery of godliness. Believing it ^{S E R M.} makes us better; we are *nourished up in the words of* ^{XXII.} *good doctrine.*

I. What is it for that *God* who was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit, to be *seen of Angels*? I answer, This word gives us the esteem they had, first, for his Person, and, secondly, for the design that he came about.

1. We may hence collect the esteem they had for the *Person* of our Lord. I don't here consider his relation to 'em as a Creator, for he made 'em, and not they themselves. *By him were all things created, whether in heaven, or in earth, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, all things were created by him, and for him,* But I shall observe the regard they paid to him as the Mediator between God and man, as *the man Christ Jesus*, as one made lower than themselves; and this you will collect from the several parts of his story.

You may see the concern that the Angels had at his birth, his baptism, his temptation in the wilderness, his agony, his resurrection, his ascension, and the consequences of that in heaven. In all these times he was nearly attended by the Spirits about the throne. A detachment of the heavenly guards was sent down; *Of the Angels he saith, he* ^{Heb. i. 7.} *makes his Angels Spirits*; this being connected to what the Spirit saith of Christ Jesus, lets us see these two things. *First*, The nature of the Angels, that they are *Spirits*, purely and simply so, not embodied, not incarnate; and, *Secondly*, That they are thus *made* for service, to be capable of more expeditious duty than we can possibly come into. They were made Spirits with regard to the Son; their lively and active nature is employed about him: But it's time that I enter upon the particulars under which I'm to range my thoughts.

S E R M.
XXII.



1. He was seen and lov'd and admir'd by the Angels at his *birth*. How ready were they to tell the news, and to serve the design? Observe with what a tenderness and caution they do their office: for they knew that the dazzle of *their* nature would be too much for a conversation with *ours*; therefore when one of 'em stands at the right hand of the altar of incense, as *Zacharias* was there attending in his place, his first work was to take off all fear and trembling; upon which he tells him, that Luk. i. 13. *his prayer was heard, and his wife, who was now stricken in years, as well as himself, should have a son.* The very naming of that turns the dread into a dispute. *Zacharias* is more astonish'd at what he heard, than at what he saw, *Whereby shall I know this, seeing that I am an old man?* But the Angel describes the office of the child who should be born, and does it in such a way, that he might ver. 14, 15. well say, *Thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord.*

There had been many a prophet and eminent man among 'em, and yet no such preparations made for his coming into the world; but the reason of all this is, that *many of the children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God, and he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias.* Before whom? Before the Lord God, to whom he should turn the children of *Israel*: And who is this *Lord their God*, before whom he was to go, but he that had the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily? *Zacharias* seems to make no difficulty of it, when ver. 67. he came to circumcise the child. *The holy Ghost was then upon him*, and under that influence he delivers those words, *Thou child shalt be called the prophet of the HIGHEST: for thou shalt go before the face of the LORD to prepare his ways,*

There

Seen of Angels.

313

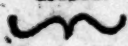
There must be a miserable tearing of all the con-^{S E R M.}
 nection that these passages have to one another, be-^{XXII.}
 fore we can suppose that our blessed Saviour him-
 self is not here call'd the *Lord God of the children*
of Israel by the Angel, and the *Most High* by *Za-*
charias. And of this *John* bare witness, *I am not*
the Christ, but am sent before him; as it was said
 he should *go before him*. So gentle and kind was
 this Angel, first to take off the fright, and then
 to give in his message. In the same manner he
 proceeded with the *Virgin Mary*. *She was trou-*^{ver. 29.}
bled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner
of salutation this should be: And when he tells her
 of having a Son, tho' her objection was much
 greater than *Zacharias's*, yet she rests upon that
 answer, *With God nothing is impossible*.

How careful, how condescending was it, for^{ver. 37.}
Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, thus to
 talk with poor mortals! The like goodness do they
 shew at the actual birth of our Lord. *There were*^{ch. ii. 8, 9.}
in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keep-
ing watch over their flocks by night, and lo the Angel
of the Lord came upon 'em, and the glory of the Lord
shone round about 'em, and they were sore afraid. You
 need not wonder much at that, for this apparition
 was of another kind from those in the Old Testa-
 ment. Then Angels put on the form of men, so
 that oftentimes they were taken for no more, till
 after they had deliver'd their message: But to these
 shepherds the Angel look'd more like himself.
 However, he soon takes off the fright, or at least
 mingles something with it, *Fear not, for behold I*^{ver. 10, 11.}
bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to^{12.}
all people: For unto you is born this day, in the city of
David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this
 shall be a sign to you, *Ye shall find the babe wrapt in*
swadling-cloaths, lying in a manger.

Observe,

S E R M.

XXII.



Judg. xiii.

22.

Observe, tho' the manifestation was glorious and frightful, yet the thing told 'em was important, and what they had long expected; and the sign was as familiar and descriptive as they could desire it to be: so that you see what effect this had upon 'em; tho' we cannot suppose they had lost their terror, yet they resolve to make the experiment. There's no such crying out as there was between *Manoah* and his wife: *Alas, we shall die, for we have seen an Angel of the Lord!* No, no, but they said one to another, let us go even now to *Bethlehem*, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us: and they came with haste, and found *Mary* and *Joseph*, and the Babe lying in a manger. 'Twas a thing that only mere necessity could have occasion'd, that a new-born child should be thrown into such a place. They in the inn could easily tell how it came about, because there was no other room for 'em; but that shepherds in a distant field should know this strange accident, and enquire for a child by a token that never happen'd before, was remarkable. No wonder that they return'd glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto 'em. So well had the Angel made himself intelligible to poor unlearned men, who could have no interest by the contrivance of the plot, and no capacity to take a part in it.

How amazing is it, that a creature who stands before God, should deliver himself to a company of shepherds, so as to leave 'em in no confusion? It shews how hearty he was in the cause he came about. Nay, besides this one, there was suddenly with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men.* Observe, this multitude did not appear at first, for then the shepherds would have been sunk too low to have receiv'd

receiv'd any message; but after the Angel had gone E R M.
XXII. distinctly thro' his errand, let 'em know what had happen'd, and given 'em an incontestible rule how they should be assur'd of it; when he had possess'd 'em of the whole story, *then* in a moment the rest who long'd to begin, the whole multitude of the heavenly host, praised God; when the shepherds could be pleas'd with it, and not frighted.

And they do it in such a song as could never be conceiv'd to come from those that kept flocks by night. For shepherds to talk of visions and angelical consorts, might be suspected as vain and delusive, but when they bring a song with 'em so full of the cause it refers to, none can think it was of their own composing, and therefore it is said, *that all they that heard it, wonder'd at those things which were told 'em by the shepherds.*

There are several passages that I might bring under this head, as the Angel of the Lord's *appearing to Joseph in a dream*, and bidding him *not fear* Matt. i. 18. to take to him *Mary his wife*, and giving him that answer to his objection which none but an Angel could give him: *That which is conceiv'd in her is of the holy Ghost.* So again, the Angel of the Lord appears to him in another dream, and directs him to *arise, and take the young child and his mother, and* ch. ii. 13. *go into Egypt, and be there until he brought him word.* And when *Herod* was dead, this Angel appears to him in a dream *the third time*, with an order for him to *take the young child and his mother, and* gover. 20. *go into the land of Israel.* Nay, *Fourthly*, there is another instance relating to this period, that he is *warn'd again in a dream to turn aside into the parts* ver. 22. *of Galilee, and come and live in a city call'd Nazareth.* So diligent were those Angels to convey the news, and to serve the design, either by voices or dreams, as the people concern'd were prepar'd to receive 'em.

S E R M.

XXII.

Mat. iii.

15.

ver. 17.

Joh. i. 33.

Cant. iii.

ult.

Mat. iv.

11.

2. He was seen of Angels, *i. e.* admir'd and lov'd by 'em at his *baptism*, which was properly his institution or entrance upon the public ministry. He submitted to that ordinance, that he might fulfil *all righteousness*; and when it was over, *heaven open'd*, the holy Ghost descended upon him, and a testimony came from thence, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. If heaven open'd, you may be sure the Angels either came down or gaz'd thro'. They who had attended his birth, and sung him into the world, they who had watch'd him down to *Egypt* and up again, they who had receiv'd a charge concerning him in his youth, in their hands to bear him up, who had encamp'd round about him, more than they do about every one that fears the Lord; These, I say, would be looking on, when the Spirit came down: first, to give him his qualifications, and then to proclaim his credentials: For as he was *anointed with the holy Ghost and with power*, so *John* himself professes, *I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize said, Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, that same is he who baptizes with the holy Ghost*. They go forth to behold *King Solomon* in his crown, on the day of his espousals, and the day of the gladness of his heart.

3. At his temptation in the wilderness, or rather after it, he was seen of Angels. He was there forty days and forty nights. He went thither to be tempted of the Devil. He submitted to the necessity and torment of nature, for after such long fasting, he hungred. And as Satan had put him upon working a miracle for bread, and casting himself down from the temple to try whether the Angels would observe their charge, and upon worshipping him for the kingdoms and glories of this world: So when the Devils left him, the Angels came and ministred to him.

What

What those words comprehend, we are not told S E R M.
XXII. in particular; but we may without any danger suppose it from the nature of the temptation. *First*, that they brought him food; for it was that he wanted, and he told the Devil, that *man liv'd not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*, i. e. by any other provision that the creation affords; for the word proceeding out of the mouth of God, is there to be understood of the gifts of his hand, as you will find by comparing it with the original passage, *Dent. viii. 3. He humbled thee, and suffer'd thee to hunger, and fed thee with Manna, that he might make thee know that man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live.* Here the *Manna* is call'd a word proceeding out of the mouth of the Lord; and this, you know, has that character given it, that *man did eat Angels food*, i. e. the food which they brought. So that it is not improbable, that when they ministred to him, it was to supply his necessity. And as they had receiv'd a charge concerning him in their hands to bear him up, so they carried him safely thro' the wilderness. They had no occasion to assist him in the conflict, knowing that *his own power would* Isa. lxiii.
5. bring salvation, and *his fury uphold him*; but it was their duty and delight to attend him afterwards.

4. At his agony in the garden he was seen of Angels. He was to endure it, and to endure it in his own Person, without any assistance from those glorious creatures that wish'd him well: *He trod the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with him*; and therefore he speaks as one totally deserted. He took no more than three disciples with him, and he withdrew himself even from them about a stone's-cast, but desir'd them to watch. There he pleads with the Father, and

SER M. at last submits to him. His disciples are asleep;
 XXII. their eyes are shut, when the pores of his body are
 Luke xxii. open in a dreadful manner; for *his sweat was as it*
 42, 43. *were great drops of blood:* and then it is observ'd,
there appear'd to him an Angel from heaven to strength-
en him.

This can be understood of no more than some few supports that were given to his human nature. 'Twas that which recoil'd, which fainted, swet, and bled; and this must have a *little strength* to go thro' the remaining sorrow. He had not strength enough to *bear* his cross, but he must have enough to *live* so long upon it as he did, to give several orders from it, to cry out, to say it is finish'd with a full voice, and immediately to die at once. How careful was this good Angel, that he might, in a station which made him lower than themselves, be able to go thro' his undertaking?

5. At his resurrection he was seen and attended of Angels. They were ready to serve him at all times; but for important reasons oblig'd to leave him at his death. He tells *Peter*, that he could pray to the Father, *who would presently send him more than twelve legions of Angels.* And if the Father had sent 'em, they would gladly have come; and what work must one of them make in a cabal of Sadducees who believ'd neither Angel nor Spirit? But then, saith he, *how should the Scriptures be fulfill'd that thus it must be?* So that it was necessary for the suffering of death, that he should be stript of his guards.

But when he came to rise again, all these restraints are over. The Angel of the Lord, as one no longer held in, goes early in the morning, and by an earthquake rolls away the stone from the door of the
 Matth. xxviii. 2. *sepulchre; his countenance was like lightning, and his*
 3. *raiment white as snow.*

And

And see what different distributions he made of S E R M.
his influences: *For fear of him did the keepers shake,* XXII.
and become as dead men; and yet you may be
sure these were pick'd out as the stoutest of the
faction. But to a couple of poor disconsolate wo-
men he saith, *Fear not, for I know ye seek Jesus who* ver. 5, 6.
was crucified: he is not here, he is risen as he said. 7.

*Come see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly
and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead, and
goes before you into Galilee: lo, I have told you. "I
your friend, and his servant; he has left me be-
hind, that you might have no disappointment."*

Tho' the keepers lay sprawling, *none of the men of
night could find their hands,* yet these women de-
parted quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great
joy. There was an awe upon their spirits, but it
gave 'em a delicious confusion, and *they ran to bring* ver. 8;

the disciples word. Afterwards some of the dis-
ciples came, and see nothing of him, and therefore
go their way. Mary who had brought them to
the sepulchre continues weeping there, and will not
leave it. Upon this, *she sees two Angels in white,
sitting one at the head, and the other at the feet, where
the body of Jesus had lain.* So ready were these
happy creatures to shew him their regard, that they
will go and *live* a while in the place where he had
been dead. Angels in a grave! the sons of im-
mortal life in the chambers of death! that they
should sit where none in their nature shall ever lie,
is very unaccountable. But you may say of their
behaviour over our Lord's grave, as it is said of
his over that of Lazarus, *Behold how they lov'd him!*

6. He was seen of Angels, *i. e.* admir'd and at-
tended by 'em at his ascension. There were forty
days, which, as they fell between his manifestation
in the flesh, and his being receiv'd up into glory,
so they partook of both, *i. e.* he was neither al-
ways with his disciples, nor had he totally left 'em.

S E R M. There was in his conversation a mixture of the inhabitant and the stranger: such an intermediate life was only to hold the length of forty days. And this being the last that his disciples should see of him here below, he was determin'd to conclude his work upon earth with a dignity suitable to the errand that brought him hither.

Luke xxiv. 50. The story is told by *Luke*, that he led 'em out to Bethany, and lift up his hands and blest 'em; and 51. as he blest 'em he was parted from them. In another book it is said, *When he spake these things, whilst they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud receiv'd him out of their sight.* But tho' they might not see all

the solemnity with which he went up, as not being able to bear it, yet it is describ'd, *Psal. lxxviii.* that the chariots of God are twenty thousands, even thousands of Angels; the Lord is among 'em. Who is this Lord, but the great Mediator? When was he among 'em, but at the time that he ascended up on high, and led captivity captive? This title, the chariots of God, intimates their office. He is said in another place to ride on the wings of the wind, and to make the clouds his chariot, i. e. (to bring it as near to our own conceptions as can be) they attend him where he moves. They go up with him, shouting, singing, praising, filling the air in their passage with melody, and the heaven in their entry with triumph. And the whole of that pompous glory concluded in this service of the Angels, that two of them stood by the Apostles in white apparel, which also said, *Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

7. He is seen of the Angels in heaven. John saw in the midst of the throne, and of the four creatures, and the four and twenty elders, a Lamb as it had been slain. It is observ'd, that when he brings

Acts i. 11. *They also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.*

brings the first begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the Angels of God worship him. This bringing him into the world may be understood of his Incarnation; and if they were to worship him *then*, we may conclude what a profound regard they would give him when he was made *perfect from his sufferings*. But some are of opinion, that the word *again* should not be the tie between one verse and another, but connected to what is here said. That it ought not to be as we read it, *again, when he brings the first begotten*, but when he brings the first begotten again into the world, *i. e.* at his resurrection and ascension. When he returns to the glory, *that he had with the Father before the world was*, then are orders issu'd out to the Angels to *worship him*. But I promise my self more room to consider this passage when I come to argue from the behaviour of the Angels to our Redeemer, as an evidence of his Deity. That such a carriage as they are directed to can be given to no other than the supreme Being, one that is *over all, God blessed for ever*.



SERMON XXIII. March 15. 1718-19.

2.



HE esteem the Angels had for our blessed Lord, appears from their care to promote the *design* that he came about. Tho' he was not in their nature, nor had they any need of his purchase, yet his good will towards men is what they follow with their hearty wishes. We read of the care they have to spread the Gospel, their particu-

Y

lar

S E R M. lar tenderness for ministers, their joy at the conversion of a sinner, their diligence about the heirs of salvation, their readiness to take the charge of a dying believer, and the welcome they give him into the place of their own habitation.

1. Christ is seen and admir'd of the Angels, in his *design* as well as his *Person*, because it is their care to spread the Gospel. Not to preach it, for that would rather confound sinners than awaken 'em:

2 Cor. iv. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us; yet the Scripture has taken notice of their zeal about this great affair. Hence we read of the Angels flying thro' the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water. This vision was of a thing that shall never be, i. e. we cannot think that God will lay aside men of like passions with ourselves, and make those Spirits his ministers who are all of 'em flames of fire. But thus much may be argu'd from it, that they do some way or other promote the knowledge of Christ among men, and so lead 'em into the methods of life eternal.*

They were the first preachers that we read of in the new Testament, to *Zacharias*, the *Virgin Mary*, and the *shepherds*. In their discourses to each of these, they lay out the nature, the office, and the design of our Redeemer. That he should be call'd *the Son of the highest, and the Lord his God*

Luke i. 32, 33. *shall give him the kingdom of his Father David; and he shall rule over the house of Jacob, and of that kingdom there shall be no end. To the shepherds they do not only proclaim his birth, and his title, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord, but the great result*

sult of all this dispensation, that it would be glory S E R M.
to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will XXIII.
towards men.

Nay, I may take their ministry from a more
early date. Daniel wept in prayer for his people,
his holy city, and the sanctuary of the Lord that
was desolate. An Angel comes down, after he had
chasten'd himself with fasting and supplication; and
what was it to tell him? a great deal more than
the news of political mercies, that the captivity of
Jerusalem was accomplish'd. Besides that, he leads
his thoughts into the main hope of *Israel*, that
Messiah the Prince was to come; to come both as a
Prince and a Sacrifice: that he would be cut off, to Dan. ix.
finish transgression, to make an end of sin, to bring in 24.
an everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision and
prophecy, and to anoint the most holy. These are the
chief doctrines of our Gospel, and they are reveal'd
to that holy prophet by the Angel.

Do but observe what a nobler employment these
happy creatures had upon the return of the peo-
ple from *Babylon*, than when they conducted the
children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*. God sent his An-
gel before 'em to *drive out the Amorite*; but there's
no comparison between their providing for the
Jews a plentiful country, and their opening out in
a better light what had been *the hope of their fa-*
thers. They brought these glad tidings of great
joy at several periods: We only say what they
sung: They and we are in the same story; and
what an aggravation will this be of our neglect, if
we despise what they bring?

'Tis mention'd as a perpetual brand upon the
children of *Israel*, that they loath'd the manna
which was *Angels food*, i e. the Angels convey'd it
to 'em; and again, that tho' they receiv'd the Law by Acts vii.
the disposition of Angels; they did not keep it: and that 53.
the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, and every trans- Heb. ii. 12
gression

S E R M. *gression and disobedience received a recompence of reward.* XXII. But as their care about us is more engag'd,

so our unbelief is more enhanc'd. When the Apostle had told us of the Angels *flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel,* He goes on to shew us their zeal for the reformation of Christianity from those corruptions under which it has suffer'd; and his prophecy is to be understood of a particular period that we are waiting for.

Rev. xiv. *Then followed another Angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.* 8.

How comes this to be the concern of Angels? why are they in heaven so much affected with our sufferings upon earth? 'Tis certain, their religion is always clean and always easy: *Babylon shall never hurt them*; but it is a Redeemer's cause; and that warms 'em into a zeal for those happy days when the mother of abominations is to perish with all her arts. This they proclaim, not only as a thing that will be, but they give fair warning, *If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.* ver. 9, 10.

What a testimony is here given to our separation from those corruptions that have stole into the worship of God? 'Tis no matter to me by what convocations or councils it is censur'd, if we have the opinion of the Angels, *the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven.* Value the Gospel as it is christian, and admire your religion as it is reform'd. An Angel preaches the one and encourages the other; and then comes in this remark upon the whole,

Here

Here is the patience of the Saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Our duty is an act of patience; A man that will be faithful will be oppos'd; and the thing we are oblig'd to keep, is, not only the commandments of God, what's contain'd in natural religion, but *that faith of Jesus*, which we can only have by revelation.

S E R M.
XXIII.
ver. 12.

2. We may farther see the care of the holy Angels about the work of a Redeemer, from their tenderness for the ministers of the Gospel. I am not now making way for any of these whimsical stories with which the Papiſts have bubbled their readers. I know no more of Angels than the Scripture has told me; their ministry is a part of the revelation I meet with there. 'Tis plain, tho' they do not preach the Gospel, they have a special charge about those that do. We have examples of this, both in the old and new Testament, which shews the wisdom of our Redeemer, that the persons who are like to meet with hardships from the inhabitants of this world, shall have better usage from those that belong to another.

I'll go over a few passages that we find in the Acts of the Apostles. In the xiith Chapter you read that *Peter* was design'd for the same violent death that *James* the brother of *John* had already suffer'd; and the utmost care is taken that he shall not escape. He is fast asleep between two soldiers, bound with two heavy chains. The Church can do no more than *pray for him*; and that's doing enough, for the work fell into able hands: *The Angel of the Lord* comes into the prison, raises him up, calls him out, the chains fell from his hands, and this in so still a manner, that *Peter thought he saw a vision*; the iron gate that led to the city open'd of its own accord, and he is left at liberty to visit a company of good people who were then at prayer

Acts xii. 3.

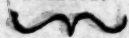
S E R M. for him. When he was come to himself he said,
 XXIII. *Now know I of a surety, that the Lord has sent his*
 ver. 11. *Angel, and has delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.* And, as if the Angel thought his work but half done in delivering an Apostle, unless he had also kill'd a tyrant, we are told at the end of that Chapter, that when *Herod* sat basking himself in
 ver. 23, 24. *the flatteries of a shouting croud, the Angel of the Lord smote him, and he was eaten up of worms, and gave up the Ghost.* By this means the word of God grew and multiplied.

Such another instance we have of their care about the Apostle *Paul*. He and his company were
 ACTS xxvii. in a storm fourteen days and nights; they saw neither sun, moon, nor stars, and perhaps no brethren
 20, 21. ashore were sensible of their danger, and therefore 'tis likely there was no extraordinary prayer for them, as there had been in the case of *Peter*. But if *Christians* knew not their danger, Angels did; for, saith *Paul*, *There stood by me this night the Angel of the Lord, whose I am, and whom I serve, and said, fear not, for thou must be brought before Caesar, and lo, God has given thee all them that sail with thee.* Tho' our experience does not run upon these stories, yet we have ground to imagine, that the heavenly guards do us many an invisible kindness, without making any noise about it. The escapes that faithful ministers have had in times of persecution are so remarkable, that it is no straining upon the case, to suppose those favours convey'd by the standing officers of a Redeemer's Providence.

3. Their love to the great work that our Lord came about, appears in the joy there's among 'em at the conversion of a sinner. Our Saviour gives us this under the similitude of two parables: The man that found his lost sheep, and the woman her piece

piece of money; they are each of 'em represented S E R M. XXIII.
 as *calling their friends and neighbours together to come and rejoice with 'em.* These friends and neighbours Luk. xv. 7.
 neither suffer'd by the affliction, nor gain'd by the mercy. They were unconcern'd, any farther than sympathy and good nature made 'em look upon it as their own case at second-hand. The Angels are very properly signified by those names; they neither lose nor get by the ruin or salvation of men. If there was no such thing as a redemption for our nature, there would still be the same happiness for theirs; but they are call'd in to rejoice with a Redeemer. He who has *sought and sav'd that which was lost* is the person whom they love, and therefore they are glad with him. This is the very application that our Lord himself makes of the parable. *I say unto you, there is joy among the Angels of heaven over one sinner that repenteth.*

From hence you may conclude, either their presence in our assemblies, or the correspondence that is kept open between our world and theirs. There's no such thing as an awaken'd soul, a sinner turn'd from the error of his way, but they know it, either by observation, or by tidings; and this sets 'em a rejoicing. Why? From the good will they have to a Redeemer. They saw him in *the travail of his soul*; they observ'd him in the garden, the weight and torture of that *agony*; they beheld him bleeding, groaning, and dying upon the cross; and it must needs be their pleasure to find that all this was not in vain; that as he gave himself for sinners, so by his grace sinners give themselves to him. They rejoice in this as the effect of a dear bargain, as a mighty purchase, and a glorious victory. There's more than love to a soul, that fills the joy; 'tis part of their praises to him who *came to save us in the name of the Lord, and therefore they sing Hosanna in the highest.*

S E R M.
XXIII.

Acts ii. 41.

Isa. xi. 9.

ch. xxx.
26.

Heb. i. 14.

And if they are so delighted in the repentance of one sinner, what will they be when the word of the Lord has a free course, and is glorify'd? With what pleasure do they look on, when people flock to the Lord, *as doves to their windows*, every one fluttering and pressing for light? What a good day was that to the Angels in heaven, when one sermon fetch'd in three thousand souls! when the people were *prick'd at their hearts*, the Angels felt the conviction; not in pain and affrightment as they did, but they saw what it would end in; and we may suppose from the pleasure that diffused among them then, what a share they will have in *joying and beholding our order and the steadfastness of our faith in Christ*: When the days come that *the knowledge of the Lord shall not drop as the rain, and distil as the dew, but cover the earth as the waters do the sea*. It will make our earth look like their heaven, and their heaven still brighter and sweeter; *As the light of the moon shall be like the light of the sun, so the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days*. What an encouragement should this be to ministers, and indeed to all of you, whom the Angels have so much obliged? Fulfil ye their joy, promote their happiness, give 'em occasion to bring more praises into heaven.

4. You see the concern they have for the work of Christ, by their care about the heirs of salvation. Our Lord has told us, that they are *all ministering Spirits*; *first*, to him; to wait upon his person, to admire and contemplate his glory: But that's not all; for, *secondly*, they are *sent forth to minister to them who shall be the heirs of salvation*. Where you observe,

First, That their whole number is included in this order, they are *all ministering Spirits*. *Gabriel* himself, who *stands in the presence of God*, goes down

to *Daniel* in a dungeon, to *Zacharias* in the temple, to the *Virgin Mary* in her solitude. S E R M.
XXIII.

Secondly, Tho' they keep their own nature, yet that's employ'd for our good. When our Saviour came down, he took upon him a new nature: The Word was made flesh, that he might dwell among us; but these still continue pure *spirits*, and do their service without any change of constitution.

Thirdly, For this they are oblig'd to leave the realms of happiness and light. They are *sent forth*; not but that it's heaven wherever they go. They don't depart from the joy and glory that are bestow'd upon their nature. However, the commission reaches to our world; there they must come, and there do their service.

Fourthly, 'Tis to the whole body of the faithful; not ministers only, or Christians of a higher standing, but every one that has obtain'd mercy of the Lord is their charge. They had as much concern for *Lazarus* who died at a gate, as for *David* who breath'd his last in a palace.

Fifthly, This is with regard to the purchase that Christ has made. For the people to whom they do these offices, are consider'd as *heirs of salvation*, the children of a King, the pensioners of a Conqueror.

Sixthly, Tho' believers are not actually in heaven, yet the thoughts of what they shall be have an influence upon the Angels; they minister to those who *shall be* the heirs of salvation, *i. e.* shall be possessors of it, and come to it as their great and last inheritance. What an esteem do they shew for Christ, when they are not ashamed of any whom he owns? Every drop of his blood is precious, every purchase of his grace is dear. Christians are beneath 'em in nature, but that's no matter, since they are united in the head. In pursuance of these

orders,

S E R M. orders, the *Angel of the Lord encamps round about*
 XXIII. *them that fear him, and delivers 'em.* Having re-
 ceiv'd a charge concerning us, in their hands they
 will bear us up, *lest at any time we dash our feet*
 Ps. xxxiv. 7. *against a stone.*

5. Their attendance in our assemblies to see what is done there, is another argument of their concern in the design that our Redeemer came about. 'Tis no force upon the imagination to suppose that they are looking on; we are charg'd to keep up an external decency *because of the Angels.* Now why should they who are blest'd with a dwelling in God's house, and praise him there, come down to services so much beneath their own? What is there in our duties worth their beholding? Is it not an abusing of themselves to be among those who dwell in houses of clay, and whose devotions are as earthy and mouldring as their persons? and yet hither they come.

They hear the doctrines of the pulpit, and see the behaviour of a congregation. Tho' they cannot look into your hearts, yet there's enough in your carriage that betrays what sort of principles are at work within. Your outward reverence to that name which is above every name, your delight in the law of the Lord, your *receiving the love of the truth are things* within their observation.

Gen. xxxii. 2. When *Jacob went on his way, the Angels of God met him*; for which reason he call'd the name of the place *Mahanaim*, because that was *God's host*. And before that, when he dream'd, he saw a *ladder reaching from earth to heaven, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it*; which makes him cry out, *How fearful is this place! this is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven!*

xxviii. 12.

We can make no such conclusions as these about any places, but we come to promote the work which Angels love. From our Gospel they learn the mysteries

mysteries of the kingdom. *Unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places is made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.* Not that we can tell 'em these things better than they know 'em; but nevertheless they are here as learners. They admire every place and company where the doctrines of the Gospel are open'd. The history of our religion comprehends *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, and these the Angels desire to look into.* They are in a bending, searching, prying posture.

S E R M.
XXIII.
Eph.iii.10.

I Pet. i.
11, 12.

Tho' they sung at the making of the earth, and its separation from the infolding waters, yet here is *a new song put into their mouths.* What is more entertaining, as it shews a greater act of wisdom, and brings in a larger return of glory? And is it not good to insist upon what they admire? Suppose they were to choose our subjects, what would they have us preach upon? Are they against *mysteries*, and things that belong to reveal'd religion? No, what they desire to know, is *the manifold wisdom of God; the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom that God ordain'd before the world to our glory.* There's nothing more pleasing to 'em than when ministers *make all men see, what is the fellowship of the mystery, that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.*

I Cor. ii.
7.

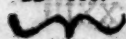
Eph.iii.10.

6. Their esteem of Christ and the work he came about, is seen by their readiness to take care of departing souls. There is something of this which a Redeemer does in his own person; *I will come again and receive you to my self, that where I am ye may be also.* The martyr Stephen was conscious to this, when he cried out, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.* But, yet the Scripture has also told us, that the Angels do a kind and friendly part upon these occasions. *They carried Lazarus's soul into Abraham's bosom.* It is happy indeed, when the

Joh. xiv.3.

Acts vii.
59.

Luke xvi.
22.

S E R M.
XXIII.

Jude 9.

the world below are shifting from us, they either can or will do us no more service, *then* do these new acquaintance step in. They will at last have the charge of collecting our dust, and building up those bodies that have been so long pull'd in pieces. Nay, they are to sort the dead, and take away the wicked from among the just. Tho' this will be the effect of the voice of the Son of man, he is to call over the graves that the slain may live; yet when he comes about this, it is *with his mighty Angels*. *Michael the Archangel disputed with the devil about the body of Moses*. And as they take care that one part of a believer shall *rest in hope*, so they go with a readiness to shew the other *the path of life*.

7. We see their esteem of Christ and the work that he came about, by the welcome they give his people into the place of their own habitation. If they minister to those who *shall be* the heirs of salvation, before they take possession of their inheritance, what will they do when these happy persons have thrown off imperfection and mortality! It is said at the resurrection, we shall be *like the Angels*, or ἰσαγγελοι, equal to 'em. That is, we shall *die no more*, or live in that gross and carnal way that we do at present; we must be then as they have been always. Thus you see how he who was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit, is seen of Angels; what a regard they have for his *person*, and with what a zeal they promote his *design*: And in these two particulars I have consider'd the first head, which was to *open* the expression, and shew you what is contain'd in it.

II. The next general head is this, that he who was thus seen of Angels is no other than *the most high God*; and that we cannot have lower notions of *Him* without charging the guilt of idolatry upon

upon them. 'Tis pity that any who profess Christ-
tianity are uneasy to be told so, or that those o-
pinions should grow into fashion, that make the
least of a Saviour; that for *this name* of Christ
ministers are to bear reproach, and to *suffer shame*.
But whatever satisfaction some can give themselves
in a faith that rests upon a creature, I hope there
are many among you who will receive it as the
glad tidings of salvation, when we say unto Zion,
Thy GOD reigneth. This is, and I trust ever shall
be, the language of our Gospel, whether men will
hear, or whether they will forbear. O Zion, that
*bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high moun-
tain: O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up
thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid: say
to the cities of Judah, behold your GOD.*

I have already argu'd it at large from the two
former branches of the mystery of godliness; and
tho' it is a *wonder*, it is nevertheless to me a *truth*,
that is dearer than all others; that he who was
manifest in the flesh, he who is justified in the Spi-
rit is a GOD; not meerly by virtue of the office
that he sustain'd, but in the highest and most pro-
per sense of the word; and as *we rejoice in his sal-
vation, so in the name of OUR GOD we will set up
our banners.*

I shall now pursue the argument from what is
further said of him, that he was *seen of Angels*.
Their homage is a great deal too much for any
one but him that made 'em; as you will find
from the worship they pay him, the meditation
they devote to him, their obedience to his com-
mands, their attendance upon his person and his
people. What they do each of these ways would
be no better than idolatry, if it was given to a
created nature.

S E R M.

XXIII.

Heb. i. 6.

I. The Scripture has expressly told us, that they worship him. The place I refer to is *Heb. i. 6.* *When he brings again the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.* That the Person here spoke of as design'd for this honour was our blessed Lord is above all dispute, both from his being call'd the *first begotten*, and the reference there is to some particular period, in which he is said to be *brought into the world*. Whether that is his incarnation or his ascension, I shall not now enquire. 'Tis plain enough that this comes in among his glories, that *all the Angels of God shall worship him.*

I know that the opinion which sets bounds to the perfection of Christ, will do the same to the worship of Angels, and tell us this is not adoration. But how to talk of what Angels do in any other than the words of Scripture I know not. And surely those people are not only ludicrous to men, but insolent to the Angels, who will dare to interpret this action of theirs by another text, give fear to whom fear, and *worship to whom worship is due.*

The Apostle gives us these words as a quotation out of the old Testament, and they can signify no less in one place than they do in another. The passage you have *Psal. xcvi. 7. Worship him, all ye Gods.* What the Psalmist calls *Gods*, the Apostle calls the *Angels of God*; but as the phrase of *worship* is what they both use, we must by no means make the sense of it so different, that in the one it is *devotion*, in the other *civility*. For the Apostle to speak of one person, and the Psalmist of another, would make the quotation impertinent. How can he prove that Christ is better than the Angels, by a sentence out of the old Testament, when it is not to be understood of *Him*? How wide had this been from all the rules of argument, and how un-
capable

capable of giving any conviction? If the Psalmist S E R M. XXIII. does not speak of a Redeemer, it could not be true that such a thing *is said* of him, {worship him all ye Gods: and therefore we both may and must fetch the *sense* from that Psalm, out of which the Apostle fetches the *words*.

And who is it, whom those Gods, or those Angels are to worship? See of whom he speaks, try whether you can conceive of his Deity with any of those diminutions that are so much applauded. It is he who reigns for which *the earth must be glad, and the multitude of isles rejoyce: clouds are about him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; a fire goes before his face, and burns up his enemies round about: his lightnings enlighten'd the world, the earth saw and trembled; the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth; the heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. Confounded be all those that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him all ye Gods.* HIM whose glory he had thus describ'd.

This Psalm must have a great deal of garbling, before the expressions can be made low enough for a creature. If *David* does not speak of the Most High in this place, he does it no where. To say, that all these characters may be given to one who has not the Supreme Nature, is to say that God has *given his glory to another*; for no words can be more descriptive of his Majesty, than what are us'd on this occasion. And to say, that tho' *David* speaks of the most high God, yet the Apostle transfers the characters to one who is no more than the first of creatures, is drawing him under a two-fold guilt. *First*, that he brings that into his argument which has no place there: he reasons upon a falshood; he affirms, that God has said *That of Christ which he never said*; and this in an Epistle

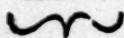
pistle to the *Hebrews*, who of all people were the most afraid of running into idolatry. Nay, *Secondly*, there's somewhat worse than this, that he is actually guilty of a robbery, and affirming that of a creature, which is peculiar to the most high God. This is what the Supreme Nature never did alienate from itself; and therefore He, whom the Angels are appointed to worship, as the Psalmist tells us, is *high above all the earth, and exalted far above all Gods.*



March 29.
1719.

SERMON XXIV.

SER M. 2.
XXIV.



HERE's another thing in our Saviour's being *seen of Angels*, that's an argument of his Divinity; and this may be deduc'd from their meditations of him. They throw in

1 Pet. i.
22.

their best thoughts upon the subject of our redemption: *These things the Angels desire to look into.* They desire it with the greatest application and fervour; looking into 'em signifies their attention and perseverance in the study; and what are *these things*? The Apostle tells us, they are such as the Prophets in former ages did minister to us, and such as are now *reported by them that have preach'd the Gospel*; and in the confirmation of which the *holy Ghost is sent down from heaven.* He had before given us the particulars under those two heads, that comprehend all the articles of our religion, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that shall follow. This is what *the Spirit of Christ, in the Prophets did testify before-hand*: This is the *salvation of which*
they

they enquir'd earnestly; and this is the grace that is S E R M. XXIV.
come unto us.

Now, merely to behold these sufferings, and to gaze at the glory that came after 'em, cannot be all that the Angels do. Our Lord's enemies had a conviction of both these: they saw him die, and were astonish'd at the evidence that was given of his resurrection: *None of those things were* Acts xxvi. 26.
done in a corner. But the bending down of the Angels to this subject, as the Greek word signifies, παρακλίνω must be to a great deal more than matters of fact. They look'd at his sufferings and the following glory, as casting an influence upon one another. That he suffer'd in such a way, as to procure, to deserve, and demand all the happiness for himself and his people, that's comprehended in the great name of glory. They saw that the consequence of his death was no less than the highest honour for himself, and a full portion for all believers, in every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. *John beheld, and heard the voice of many Angels round about* Rev. v. 11.
the throne, and the number of 'em was ten thousand 12.
times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

Now, is it possible that a creature should be equal to such a claim? How could the punishing of one that is innocent bring a pardon to them that are guilty? Why must his *lasting death* be for every man? How can we reconcile it to our notions of God's justice, which demands satisfaction for sin? *First*, that this should be exacted on one that *did not sin*, and *Secondly*, that it should be discharg'd from those that did nothing but sin? If an innocent person should choose to die, yet what has this to do with those who deserve to die?

Z

Their

S E R M. Their debt is never the less, except he that *makes*
 XXIV. the satisfaction does also *receive* it.

And therefore, I don't at all wonder, that when people go off from the Deity of Christ, they make wretched work in explaining the story of his death, and do what they can to sink the imputation of his righteousness. They will not allow that he died for his people as their ransom and sacrifice; and indeed I don't see how they can: for if he's a creature, let him be never so glorious, it would be an injury to *lay on him the iniquity of us all*. If it was no more than the case of an Angel, how great must the hardship be for one of them to come down into our nature, to live so poor and low as Christ did, and at last to die under a curse? Might not such a one plead, "Lord, why am I sent upon this errand? if thou wilt save any of that wicked race, let it not be at my expence. It was not *my law* that they broke; and therefore, if they must be the objects of thy love, don't bring it about by making me the mark of thine anger.

The higher any creature is above the Angels, the better would his argument have been against the fatigue and charges of this design. But it was *the Lawgiver* himself who made all the creation, and has a revenue of glory from it; it was He who

Gal. iv. 4. came *under the law*, that we might receive the adoption of sons. He had no necessity upon him from the command of a superior, but speaks like one at liberty, *Lo, I come to do thy will, O God*. He then submitted to take upon him a nature, that was to be supported, to be directed and controll'd.

Heb. x. 5. When he came into the world he said, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me*. He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself. But,

Antecedent

Antecedent to his own resolution, there was no ^{S E R M.} government over him; and therefore the Apostle ^{XXIV.} joins these two together, which cannot be understood of the same nature, but shews that the Person of whom he speaks is to be consider'd with this variety, that he came of the *Jews, as concerning the flesh*, but he is *over all, God blessed for ever*—Rom. ix. more. This is what the Angels desire to look into, 5.

The mercy-seat was the throne of the Most High. We often read, that he *dwells between the Cherubims*. Their eyes were fix'd on *him*, as carrying on a design of love, *the pleasure of the Lord* that should prosper in his hand. And if that figure, either in colours or gravings, was an emblem of their desires to look into the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, you see *with whom* their conversation was, that their eyes were represented as turn'd upon a *God*. We can hardly conceive, that they should be so taken up in their eternity with the actions of a creature, or that they would think the humbling of one above 'em, so as to bring him a little below 'em, was a full amends to the justice of God, the avowance of his holiness, or the magnifying of his law.

There's more dishonour done to God by the sin of man, than the death of all the Angels in heaven could be able to repair; and the reason is, because the offence is offer'd to an Infinite Nature, and the recompence cannot be made by a finite one. Now, tho' Christ Jesus is above 'em, yet if he is a creature, he is still as far from infinite as they are. And therefore, when God speaks of putting him to death,

S E R M. he calls it the awaking of his sword *against the man*
 XXIV. *that was his fellow.* 'Twas not enough that this
 Person should be innocent, an Angel had *that cha-*
 Zech. xiii. *rafter* in him, and could have died the just for the
 7. unjust; but he must be *equal* to the Party whom
 he came to satisfy, and then those sufferings had
 in 'em merit enough to claim all the glory that
 follow'd.

3. Their obedience to his commands is another
 argument of their regard to his Divinity; that as a
 GOD he is seen of Angels. Thus does the Apo-
 Heb. i. 7. *stle* speak of Him and of them. *Of the Angels he*
saith, Who makes his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers
a flame of fire. To whom are they ministers, but
 to Him that made 'em? He that gave 'em their
 spirituality, as so many flames of fire, is the only
 object of their veneration and duty. Well, the
 next words let us see which way their obedience
 is paid: *To the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is*
for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the scep-
tre of thy kingdom. Can any thing greater than this
 be said of the Divine Majesty?

Both these passages are taken out of the book
 of Psalms: that concerning the Angels is in the
 civth, where we read of God's eternal greatness;
 and it's mention'd as his noblest production of life,
 that he makes his Angels Spirits, and his Ministers
 a flaming fire. Had there been, as we are lately
 told, two creatures above 'em, the Son and the
 holy Ghost, why did not the Psalmist begin with
 these, as a more exalted instance of what was done
 in the creation? 'Tis apparent the scheme was not
 thought of in his day, but is reserv'd for our la-
 ter times.

The other passage is taken out of the xlvth Psalm,
 and the words must mean the same in one place,
 that they do in the other: *To the Son he saith, Thy*
throne, O God, is for ever and ever. The translati-
 on

on that some have insinuated, *God is thy throne for ever*, carries in it such an uncertain sound, that I cannot determine these words are the right sense, till I find they bear any sense at all. Angels have *thrones*, and they are call'd *Gods*; and as their thrones are never to be destroy'd, in that sense they are *for ever and ever*. But is there not something in the sentence too great for them? We must take care that in bringing down the words by such an interpretation, we do not rob the Apostle of his design: for he is shewing us, that something is said to the Son, which never was said of the Angels. Nay, he goes on, *The sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom*. You may bring these words low enough to understand 'em of *David* or *Solomon*; but can we imagine that the holy Spirit means no more?

The addition, *God, even thy God has anointed Thee with the oyl of gladness above thy fellows*, does only prove that our Saviour is to be consider'd in a lower created nature, which is what none denies: In that sense, he saith, *I go to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God*: Where he puts his relation to the Most High as his God and Father, upon the same grounds with that which his people have. But the Apostle here tells us, that he is God in that sense as to answer our highest notions of a Deity. *THOU, LORD, hast in the beginning laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they shall all wax old, as does a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be chang'd; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.* These are things that were never mention'd of any but the most High God. That He is *the Creator of the ends of the earth, the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity; that the heavens are the Lord's, and he is without any va-*

SER M. *riableness or shadow of turning.* And yet here they
 XXIV. are plainly affirm'd of Christ, and brought in as
 the reason, why the Angels should *worship* him, and
 be *ministring Spirits* to him. They can argue as
 much for their duty to the Son, as we can for
 ours to the Father: *He has made us, and not we
 ourselves; we are the work of his hands.*

To this the Scripture has given a happy testi-
 mony from a text that was never pretended to be
 dropt in copies, and cannot easily be mangled with
 criticism, Col. i. 14—18. he speaks of the king-
 dom of God's dear Son, *in whom we have redempti-
 on thro' his blood, the forgiveness of sins.* When we
 talk of *his blood*, we must consider him as a man
 like ourselves, capable of dying as we are. But
 from this he rises into other characters, that shew
 we are to regard him as an omnipotent Being: *By
 him were all things created that are in heaven, and
 that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they
 be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers;
 all things were created by him and for him; and he
 is before all things, and by him all things consist; and
 he is the head of the body the church, who is the be-
 ginning, the first-born from the dead.*

I don't remember a text in all the Bible where
 the work of creation is laid down in more lofty
 particulars. Here you see the foundation of that
 duty which the Angels ever pay him. The things
 said to be done *by him* are never mention'd as
 the work of a creature. When the Lord answer'd
Job out of the whirlwind, it was with this que-
 stion: *Where wast thou when I laid the foundations
 of the earth?* and the reverence it produc'd from
 that good man was, *I know that THOU canst do e-
 very thing.* But the particulars mention'd by the
 Apostle are greater than those with which God
 fills his argument to *Job*. We read of things in
 heaven and earth, visible and invisible; thrones,
 dominions,

Job
 xxxviii.
 4.
 xlii. 2.

dominions, principalities, and powers. These, I S E R M.
suppose, must be understood of those exalted Be- XXIV.
ings that are plac'd in such dignities. By thrones,
we may conceive of the Angels that sit upon 'em;
by dominions and principalities, the inhabitants a-
bove who have these honours belonging to 'em.
Well, all things both above and below were created
by him, and for him.

There is an answer to this argument, that things
were created by Jesus Christ as an *instrument*; that's
a wooden word indeed, and people must be very
ready to part with the text and their senses too, be-
fore they can let the evidence of so plain a Scri-
pture be turn'd off in that manner: 'tis talking by
no rules of language. Will any one call the Lord
Mayor of *London* the King's instrument, because by
him he governs the city? Is not this *darkening*
counsel by words without knowledge? But the weight
of the argument is still heavier upon 'em, when it
is said, that all things were not only created by
him, but *for him*. Now, we know that the Lord
has made all things *for himself*. We are not able
to conceive of the Most High in greater apprehen-
sions than those, that He is *the God for whom are* Heb. ii.
all things, and by whom are all things: that of him, 10.
and thro' him, and to him, are all things. Rom. xi.
36.

It would be blasphemy to say this of any other
besides himself. 'Tis the language of their praises in
heaven. The four and twenty elders fall down
before him that sits upon the throne, and *worship*
him that lives for ever and ever, and cast their crowns Rev. iv.
before the throne. These are descriptions of the 10, 11.
utmost reverence they can pay; and what they
say with all this solemnity is, *Thou art worthy, O*
Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou
hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are
and were created. Where's the difference between
those professions and adorations, and what is here

BERM. expressly said of Christ Jesus, that all things were
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 on earth to be understood of a creature, when they
 in heaven give 'em to none but the Creator? How
 comes one text to signify a supreme Agent, and a-
 nother, without any diminution of language, to
 be no more than a lofty account of an instrument?
 Such blundering work will people make of it, when
 their reasons are too great to receive a mystery, and
 too little to explain it. No wonder that such an
 usage of revelation prepares the world to despise it
 all. For when many follow these pernicious ways the
 way of truth is evil spoke of.

4. The attendance the Angels give to the per-
 son and people of a Redeemer, furnishes out ano-
 ther argument for his Divinity: *They are all ministring*
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 the same chapter they are call'd ministring spirits
 both to Him and to us, we cannot possibly give
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 ces of care and goodness are not only an act of
 friendship to believers, but of obedience to our
 Lord. Thus Daniel tells the King: *My God has*
 Dan. vii. 22. *sent his Angel to shut the lions mouths:* and Gabriel
 ix. 23. himself owns, *The commandment came forth, and I*
was caus'd to flee swiftly. We read of his giving
 Psa. xci. the Angels a charge over us. Our Saviour in his
 11. humiliation saith, he could pray the Father, who
 would presently send him more than twelve legions of
 Angels. And when they minister to the heirs of
 salvation, they are sent to do it; which supposes
 that their tenderness about us is all along carried on
 with a regard to him that is over 'em.

Now, who is this Person, and how do they be-
 have towards him? We find, Isa. vi. 1. that the
 prophet saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and
 lifted up, and his train fill'd the temple. His train's
 filling

filling the temple must refer to the work of salvation that he came about. Whether it is to be understood of his human nature, which is call'd the temple of his body, or the house of God at Jerusalem, the city of the great King, I shall not now enquire. The words are true in both senses; for when the desire of all nations came, he fill'd the house with glory. Hag. ii. 7. His throne that was high and lifted up, is to be understood of something greater than what he did upon earth: Above this throne stood the Seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he cover'd his face, with twain he cover'd his feet, and with twain he did fly.

Was not the solemnity of this attendance, hiding their faces as unable to look, their feet as unworthy to stand, and stretching their wings as ready to go, too much for a creature? Could they have done any more to him that made 'em? It is evident, they do not talk of him as one between themselves and the throne of God, as the Father's Deputy and Vicegerent, but cry of him in a way that some people would not have us cry to him: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of thy glory. This is the repeated attribute in heaven, Holy, holy, holy Lord God, Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And tho' there is a great deal of pains taken to shew us, that the government over the earth may be committed to one that is not God by nature, yet this expression, The whole earth is full of thy glory, carries in it those praises that are ascrib'd to the Most High: O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name above all the earth! and again, The earth is full of thy riches.

The posts of the door mov'd at the voice of him that cried, and the house was fill'd with smoke. This, you'll say, might be the work of a creature: an Angel was able to do so much; but however, it is elsewhere mention'd as an instance of Omnipotence:

SER. M.
XXIV.

Rev. iv. 8;

Pf. viii. 1.

civ. 24.

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The earth is full of thy riches. civ. 24.

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ence:

S E R M. tence: *They said, Lord, thou art God, who hast made*
 XXIV. *heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in 'em is,*
 Acts iv. *grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may*
 24. *speake thy word, by stretching out thy hands to heal,*
that signs and wonders may be done in the name of thy
holy child Jesus. No doubt of it, they here apply
to the Father, and it is observ'd as a thing not un-
worthy of HIM, that when they had pray'd, the
place was shaken, where they were assembled together.
That smoke, which came into Solomon's temple, is
call'd the glory of the Lord. With regard to which
it is said, that he would dwell in the thick darkness;
so that such expressions as these, The posts of the
door mov'd at the voice of him that spake, and the
house was fill'd with smoke, are brought in as the
work of Omnipotence in other places of Scripture,
whatever they may be allow'd to signifie here.

We can easily imagine how the admirers of the new scheme would understand what happen'd; but let us enquire what *Isaiah* says of it, who liv'd a long while before our age of liberty and politeness. And we find in the

First place, that he dare not use the name of a Redeemer, and the mystery of salvation, with the freedom that is now contended for, but rather cries out, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips Very different from the language of those who speak *proud things, and whose lips are their own.* 'Tis a sign he either saw too much, or they see too little; which shews us by the way, that the more we know of Christ Jesus, the greater reverence shall we use in speaking of him. If ever the light of the glorious Gospel breaks out among us, the particular confession of that day will be *the uncleanness of our lips.* However,

Secondly, he gives you the ground of this lamentation: Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. If the word King may signifie an office, yet

yet the other title, the Lord of hosts, is us'd so of- S E R M.
ten, that we should think it a sacred name. Well, XXIV.

One of the Seraphims flew to him, and laid a live coal upon his mouth, saying, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purg'd. This must be by a commission from him, with whom alone is forgiveness. After this, he heard the word of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send? and who will go for us? That Lord who sat upon the throne, and is call'd by the Angels, the Lord of hosts. And HE said, go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, and perceive not, &c.

Now can any text in the Bible express more duty and attendance than the Angels here are said to give? and yet that it may be secure from all plunder of modern interpretations, the Evangelist has quoted these very words, with this remark upon 'em, *These things said Esaias, when he saw HIS glory* Joh. xii. and spake of HIM: That is, of Christ Jesus: For 40. 41. the story is this, that tho' HE had done so many miracles before 'em, yet they believed not on HIM, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, who has believed our report? And again, they could not believe, because Esaias had said, he has blinded their eyes, &c. *These things said Esaias, when he saw HIS glory, i. e. in the year that king Uzziah died, and spake of HIM.* The very same God, who being manifest in the flesh, and dwelling among us, Tho' he was in the world, and the world was made by him, yet the world knew him not.

Thus you see this was a doctrine long enough before Creeds were ever thought of; and if we would build upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, it must be by a good confession of what they have told us. I may plead, as the Apostle does in a lower case, *Say I these things as a man, or saith not the law the same also?* As the ministry we have received is concerning him who is the true God and eternal life, so having obtain'd mercy, Joh. v.

SER. M. *we faint not* under all reproach and hardship, but
 XXIV. *renounce the hidden things of dishonesty, the sculking*
 ~~~~~  
 2 Cor. iv. *artifice of those who have no pleasure in the truth,*  
 3. 4. 5. *who have designs that they dare not own. We*  
*walk not in craftiness, nor handle the word of the Lord*  
*deceitfully, but by a manifestation of the truth, and*  
*that the greatest truth of our religion, commend our*  
*selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God;*  
*and if this Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are*  
*lost.*

III. The next general head is to consider it as  
 a MYSTERY, that our God should be seen of  
 Angels; and tho' this is objected against the doc-  
 trine, and makes people look on it as foolishness,  
 yet that need be no surprise; so it ever was, and so  
 it ever will be, as long as the carnal mind is enmity  
 [ 1 Cor. ii. 5. *against God. We speak wisdom among them that are*  
*perfect: Howbeit not the wisdom of this world, nor*  
*of the princes of this world, that come to nought, but*  
*we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the*  
*hidden wisdom which God has ordained before the world*  
*unto our glory. You see of what nature our doc-*  
*trine is, and how clashing it must be with the*  
*pride of human reason; and therefore when*  
*persons are so very merry upon a christian's be-*  
*lieving what he does not understand, and repre-*  
*sent all that faith as irrational and enthusiastick,*  
*one would think they never read what the Apostle*  
*saith, That the natural man receiveth not the things of*  
*the Spirit of God, but they are foolishness to him, nei-*  
*ther can he know 'em, because they are spiritually*  
*discern'd.*

How poorly must my text look in the Bible,  
 which is here introduc'd with a heavenly pomp,  
*Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness:*  
 if by *mystery* we are to understand something that  
 is not wonderful, and by a *great mystery* what is no

more than a rational system! and tho' it is said to S E R M.  
XXIV.  
be mysterious *without controversy*, yet it shall be a controversy, whether it is any mystery at all? The glorious doctrines that are wrapt up in this account shall be denied, because they are what the Scripture tells us they should be, the great mysteries of godliness. Alas! whither are we running! Do you think God would deliver himself with all this preparation, and talk of *great mysteries*, when he design'd to tell us no more than what we might have had without any revelation?

That Christ was manifest in the flesh, is true, for he was made of a woman; but take off his Deity from the report, and where's the mystery of it? It was none to the *Jews*, when he tells 'em, *ye know not whence I am*, they were ready to answer him in the negative, *His father, and mother, and brethren we know, and how saith he then, I came down from above?* People may wrangle as long as they will, but if our religion is both describ'd and recommended to us as a *great mystery*, the mysteriousness of any one doctrine in it can be no objection, because it agrees to what is said of the whole. Now this part of the story, that he was seen of Angels is wonderful, in that they admir'd a Saviour whom they did not need, and regarded him in a nature below their own.

1. This was a Saviour of whom they had *no need*, for they never sinned. I use these words in a comparative sense, *i. e.* they had not such occasion for a Redeemer as we have; for it is supposed, and that with a great deal of evidence, that they are now confirm'd by him, and fix'd in a happiness of which there will be no shadow of turning. Hence they are call'd by one of our names, *the elect Angels*, as chosen of God, not to be redeem'd, but only to be assur'd of what they have already.

Now

S. E. R. M. Now is it not a wonder, that they who never  
 XXIV. knew either guilt or misery, any otherwise than  
 by looking on, should so admire a design that only  
 comprehends them at the second-hand? Religion and the great interest of Christianity is recommended to us, by such arguments as these; *I have*  
 Prov. xxii. 20. *made known to thee excellent things, saith Solomon,*  
 Deut. *even to thee; This is not a vain thing, saith Moses,*  
 xxxii. 47. *because it is your life: We are called to work out*  
 Phil. ii. 13. *our own salvation.* But none of these reasons can have an influence upon the Spirits about the throne; they being made with a purity always kept it; and yet these are things that the Angels desire to  
 Acts xiii. 41. *look into. Behold ye despisers, and wonder, and perish.* How will you escape, if you neglect this great salvation? they admire the way of happiness that was contriv'd for your nature, and yet you refuse it. Will not all the wisdom of that upper world be directed against you? *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou turn?*

2. It farther enhances this wonder, that they should pay so much regard to one who came down into a nature beneath their own. The sin of the devils was *pride*, which some have imagin'd (and they can do no more than imagine it) shew'd it self by refusing offices of service to mankind. Whether it is so or no, the Scripture has not told us; but it is very apparent, the elect Angels are fill'd with no such temper. They have lov'd the place of our dwelling, for *they sung together* at the making of the earth, and *shouted for joy* that there were creatures below themselves. We were then a little lower than the Angels, to shew us that it was no great condescension for them to have communion with a nature so well made. But when it is said of our blessed Lord, that he was *lower than the Angels*, there the words signify a greater distance from 'em,

If

ob  
 xxxviii.  
 7.



## GOD *seen of Angels.*

351

If you understand the Psalmist of *Adam*, his inferiority to the Angels was consistent with immortality; but Christ was made *lower than they for the suffering of death*. The distance between that frail and troublesome life that *he* submitted to, and *their* happiness, is inconceivable by us, who know so little what it is to be like them. Now if they regarded our nature in perfection, as that which was not much beneath 'em, is it not a wonder they look at it in a person who calls himself a *worm and no man*? But they saw in him something above the Angels, as well as beneath 'em. They knew *that he had by inheritance a more excellent name than they*. See him therefore, who had been despis'd and rejected of men, admir'd by the Angels of God. He whom *the builders refus'd*, the wise and learned men had set at nought, *as a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, He is the head of the corner. He is in a place which the Angels give way to let him take; for *to none of them has he put in subjection the world to come*. This is what the Scripture has deliver'd to us as a mystery, both in the old and new Testament. *It is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

S E R M.  
XXIV.  
Heb. ii. 13;

Pf. xxii. 4;

Matt. xxi;  
41, 42,



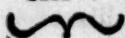
S E R-



April 12.  
1719.

# SERMON XXV.

SERM.  
XXV.



Have no more to do upon this branch of the Christian Religion, than to shew you how it is a mystery of GODLINESS. That, like all the rest, it makes us better, and brings forth fruit to account. That you may consider this in a distinct way, I shall lead you into the two heads of practical holiness; our *duty* and our *comfort*; and let you see, that each of these receive a happy influence from what is said of Christ Jesus in my text, that he *was seen*, or admir'd, and ador'd of *Angels*.

I. The belief of this gives life and soul to our *duty*. 'Tis a doctrine according to godliness, because from hence we are instructed in our worship and reverence to a Redeemer, a courageous profession of his name, a dependence upon his grace as sufficient for us, and a care and love to his people. These, you know, are so many *beauties of holiness*, by which we *adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour*, and whatever brings us into such a practice, must do a friendly part to our religion. 'Tis thus that we *shew forth the praises of him who has call'd us out of darkness into a marvellous light*. You will find that our Lord's being seen of Angels, is a suitable and powerful argument, as will appear by going over the particulars.

I. We

(1.) We are called to the worship and reverence S E R M.  
of him who is our Redeemer. All believers, in XXV.  
every place, call upon the name of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. i. 2.  
This indeed supposes that he is God, otherwise  
no fulness from a creation, no acquir'd glories would  
make him equal to it; for we go on in the strength Psal. lxxi.  
of the Lord, and make mention of his righteousness, 16.  
even of his only. David had none in heaven but the lxxiii. 25.  
most high God, and no more have we. He alone 26, 27.  
was to be the strength of his heart, and his portion  
for ever; and all that went a whoring from him,  
were to perish. Every act of worship that is not  
directed to the Supreme Being, is no better than  
adultery, a breach of our faith, and a provocati-  
on to his jealousy. 'Tis a principle of natural re-  
ligion, that none but God is to be worship'd; and  
it is never to be destroy'd by any revelation, un-  
less we suppose that God gives up a glory by the  
Gospel, which he always kept to himself under  
the Law.

I have shewn you under the former head, that  
the Angels pay their fullest and most proper devo-  
tion to him who is *the King of Saints*. I consider'd  
the Scriptures that tell us so, without any force  
upon the words in their plain and easy sense. I  
made use of no human interpretations to give 'em  
a bias, but laid them before you without any  
artifice, comparing spiritual things with spiritual;  
and I think, that from this it appears in its na-  
tive evidence, *that all the Angels of God do wor-  
ship him; Him who came into the world, and is  
gone to the Father.*

What an argument is this for us to come *under  
the law to Christ!* Well may we say of him as *Pe-  
ter* does to *Cornelius*, *He is Lord of all.* Not meer- Act. x. 36.  
ly by constitution, but antecedent to his appearing  
in our nature, and collecting to himself such a ful-  
ness of merit. *He had a glory with the Father be-* Joh. xviii.  
*fore* 3.



S E R M. *fore the world was.* Tho' the Apostle takes notice  
 XXV. that he came of the *Jews, according to the flesh*, yet  
 Rom. ix. 5. he is *over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.* Certainly  
 he does not speak of the one as consequential  
 upon the other; that because he came of the *Jews*,  
 therefore he is above the Angels; and I cannot  
 imagine why such a title does not carry as much  
 in it, as the same words, *chap. i. 25.* when speak-  
 ing of the *Gentiles*, he saith, *They serve the creature*  
*more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever, Amen.*  
 He sets his *Amen* to 'em both. That very name  
 which he gives the most high God, and by which  
 he is distinguished from all the idols in the crea-  
 tion, is, that he is *over all*; as if that was the  
 greatest he could say of him: And must it signify  
 a supremacy of nature in one place, and only an  
 eminent exaltation in another? Shall the words,  
*over all, blessed for ever*, be the title both of a God  
 and a creature? These clashes of interpretation up-  
 on the same phrase make our Apostle guilty of  
 what he abhors and condemns, *uttering words not*  
*easy to be understood*, which he calls *speaking to the*  
*air*, and that in a matter where a mistake is most  
 fatal.

Here you see your company, who they are that  
 lead on the worship of *Messiah the Prince*. We  
 may call upon them as the first rank of servants,  
 Psal. ciii. *Praise him, all ye Angels, that excel in strength, ye mi-*  
 20, 21, *nisters of his that do his pleasure: bless him all ye his*  
 22. *hosts, and——praise this Lord, O my soul.* The  
 Apostle speaks of the devotion that Christ has a-  
 bove, as an universal thing, that it runs thro' the  
 creation, it reaches as far as religion it self does;  
 Phil. ii. 10. where-ever there is any worship, he has it. *In*  
*the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in*  
*heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth,*  
*and every tongue shall confess that Jesus is Lord*  
*to the glory of God the Father.* The argument loses  
 none

hence of its force from the last expression; for it is certain, that all the duty we pay to Christ is to the glory of God the Father. When *the Son of man is glorified, God is glorified in him; and if God is glorified in him, God does also glorify him in himself.* But the question is, whether this bowing the knee, and confessing with the tongue, does not go as far as either ours or the angelick nature can do in a way of homage.

S E R M.  
XXV.  
John xiii.  
31, 32.

That you may take the full meaning of these words, observe their situation in other parts of Scripture. They are plainly fetch'd out of *Isa. xlv. 22, 23. Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth.* Whether this is the Father, or the Son that calls, the argument is still the same; because the reason he gives for the dependence of the whole world is this, *I am the LORD, and there is none else.* That's the character which he maintains, and will not part with, *I have sworn by my self, and the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return: that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.* You see in this resolution, he declares himself to be God, and that there is *none else*; and shall this homage be paid to another which he demands to himself as the *only God*? Can we imagine, after such a declaration of his being *alone* in the Deity, that he would alienate any of that honour which he speaks of here as his peculiar?

Nay, methinks this is mention'd as belonging to Christ with great enlargements; for by the prophet it is only demanded from *the ends of the earth*, every knee, and every tongue *there* have their duty allotted 'em; but *here* we read of *things in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth*, that they are all bowing and praising. The Apostle, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, makes these accounts signify our appearance at his tribunal; *We shall stand before the*

Rom. xiv.  
10, 11,  
12.

S E R M. judgment-seat of Christ. For it is written, as I live;  
 XXV. *saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God. Standing before the judgment-seat of Christ, is giving an account of our selves to God, and the proof we have of it, are those words out of the old Testament, which are plainly affirm'd of a Redeemer in the new.*

See therefore how you ought to consider your great Saviour, and with what a compass a believer may send out his summons. Praise him from the  
 Pf. cxlviii. 1, 2. *heavens, praise him in the heights; praise him, all ye his Angels, praise him, all ye his hosts. O Lord our*  
 viii. 1. *Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth, who hast set thy glory above the heavens! What a pattern is here for your duty? Well may they that stand upon a sea of glass, and have got the victory over the beast and his name, cry out as they do, Great*  
 Rev. xv. 3, 4. *and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints, who would not fear thee, and glorify thy name! Do what*  
 Pf. ciii. 20. *you find the Angels have always done; Obey his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his words; bow before him with reverence and a godly fear. Give glory to him who is worthy to be prais'd; and*  
 Rev. v. 13. *be sure to come into the great comfort. Every creature that is in heaven, and in the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that is in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be to him that sits on the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever.*

(2.) Another act of our duty is a couragious profession of his name. 'Tis not enough that with the  
 Rom. x. 10. *heart man believes unto righteousness, but confession must be made to salvation: Therefore if thou believe in thine heart the Lord Jesus, and confess with thy mouth that God rais'd him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. This supposes that the acknowledgment*  
 of



of the mystery carries in it a danger. We are told <sup>S E R M. XXV.</sup> of times when people *would not endure sound doctrine*; and ministers are either to quit their Gospel or their reputation. If they will not bring down revelation to mens reason, and the rules of life to their lusts, they shall have the run of hell and earth against 'em. *Briars and thorns are with 'em, and they dwell among scorpions.* <sup>Ezek. ii. 6.</sup> We are bid not to be *dismay'd at their looks.* None of us is sufficient for these things. <sup>2 Tim. iv. 3.</sup>

The Apostle thought it needful to exhort Timothy in an evil day, *Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, according to the power of God;* and in the same Epistle he takes notice of the different carriage he had met with among professors. He saith of Onesiphorus, *He sought me out diligently, and was not ashamed of my chain.* But every one had not that integrity, *At his first answer,* <sup>ch. iv. 16.</sup> *all men forsook him, no man stood by him;* and as he begs that couragious professor might find mercy of the Lord in that day, so he prays God for the rest of 'em, that it *might not be laid to their charge.*

The Scripture has exprest a great deal of value for what we do in testimony to the ways and cause of a Redeemer under the strife of tongues. He says to a church at Pergamos, *Thou heldest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith.* When that name was going, they renewed their catch, and took faster hold of it. The same is observ'd of those in Philadelphia, *I know thy works, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name;* and he bids 'em continue so, *Behold I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast,* <sup>ch. iii. 8.</sup> *that no man take thy crown.* <sup>ver. 11.</sup>

To this glorious part of our duty, we are led by the consideration of what the Angels do. They

S E R M. were not asham'd of him in the wilderness when  
XXV. he hungred, and in the garden when he fainted;

they made no secret of his perfections; they came out as the armies of heaven against the *dragon* and his Angels, who assail a Redeemer's throne. See therefore what a number of professors you have to go before you. Remember the terror of that  
Luk.ix.26. threatening, *Whoever shall be asham'd of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the son of man be asham'd, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* Observe here the nature of our temptation; the opposition we receive is from adulterers and sinners; the former are in jest with all religion, and the latter are in earnest against it; so that from such a mixture you may expect a trial of *cruel mockings*; and if they can reach to it, of *scourgings, and bonds, and imprisonments.*

Carnal security will plead with a great deal of reason against the dangers of a profession then. "What signifies speaking for Christ in a lewd and "scandalous age? I shall only be laught at." Well, but if God has plac'd you among these people, he expects you shall appear for him. 'Tis not enough that you say I love a Saviour, I'm not weary of him; the crime here mention'd, is being *asham'd of him*. Perhaps you will say, that you are not, you value his person, and speak well of his name. Well, but if you're asham'd of *his words*, of the revelation that he has given, it's all the same thing. You're to stick by his doctrine against all the sneer and banter of ungodly men; and if you do not, he will look as shy upon you, as you do upon him; and that, at a time when you will want to be own'd; he will be *asham'd of you before the Angels*, and tell them, "There stands a sneaking professor, one who held the truth in unrighteousness, "who was more tender of his own name than he  
" was

“ was of mine; he had rather my glory should  
 “ suffer a robbery than his own reputation a blot. S E R M.  
XXV.  
 “ Despise him, O ye Angels, let not such a cow-  
 “ ard come into the armies of heaven : Let *the* Rev. xxi. 8.  
 “ *fearful and unbelieving*, and abominable and mur-  
 “ derers, and all liars, have their part in the lake  
 “ that burns with fire and brimstone.” But how  
 glorious is the reverse to this sentence, *Whosoever*  
*shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man*  
*confess before the Angels of God?* For the King him-  
 self to own you in the face of the whole Court,  
 to tell the surrounding Angels, “ There is one  
 “ who forgot every interest but Mine, and every  
 “ Friend but Me; receive him among your selves,  
 “ he as well as you has *kept the word of God, and*  
 “ *testimony of Jesus.*

Thus the *trial of your faith* will be found unto 1 Pet. i. 7.  
*praise and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* What  
 signifies bowing to the humour of those who de- Jam. ii. 4.  
*spise that worthy name by which you are call'd?* What  
 is their favour worth? This *praise of men*, that you  
 love more than the praise of God, is nothing but  
 a little putrify'd breath : But give all things the  
 reputation they will have at last, and 'tis enough  
 if the zeal that is now condemn'd comes then to  
 be admir'd. *With me it is a very small thing that* 1 Cor. iv.  
3, 5.  
*I should be judg'd of man's judgment; but the Lord*  
*will come, and bring to light the hidden things of dark-*  
*ness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts, and*  
*then shall every man have praise of God.* “ May my  
 “ soul be under those powers of a world to come,  
 “ and act in the whole profession of a Minister and  
 “ a Christian, with a view to such an acknowledg-  
 “ ment before the Angels of heaven.

(3.) From his being seen of Angels, in the way  
 that I have describ'd, we are encourag'd in our  
 dependence upon his grace, as that which is *suffi-*  
*cient for us.* They admire him as *worthy to receive* Rev. v.  
13.



# 360 The Mystery of GODLINESS,

S E R M. honour, and glory, and strength, and salvation, and  
XXV. power, and blessing; as one who by the blood of  
his cross has reconcil'd unto himself things in heaven,  
and things on earth, and therefore here is enough for  
our confidence.

To this purpose, I would lead your thoughts to a Scripture that has really suffer'd by our translation, and ought to have the sense of it retriev'd. 'Tis Col. i. 19. He speaks there of Christ Jesus, as having in all things the pre-eminence, or the government among all persons; and then saith, *for it pleas'd the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*. Thus we read it in our Bible, but there is no such word as Father in the Greek. Ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσθ' ὄκησε πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα κατοικῆσαι. All fulness pleas'd to dwell in him; or, it pleas'd himself, all fullness should dwell there. For we find the following verses return the several actions upon himself, though our translation having made a mistake in one clause, carries it through the rest. Καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ ἀποκαταλλάξαι τὰ πάντα εἰς αὐτὸν, εἰρηνοποιήσας διὰ τῆς αἱματὸς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς εἰς τὰ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. That word εἰρηνοποιήσας, *making peace*, may be affirm'd of Christ, of whom it is further said, that δι' αὐτοῦ, *by himself*, he reconciles all things, εἰς αὐτὸν, *to himself*. Nay, in the body of his flesh thro' death, he is to present you holy and blameless, and unproveable, κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ, *in his own sight*.

So that, tho' the doctrine of the same person's both *making* and *receiving* satisfaction is laugh'd at, Eph. v. 25. yet it is the plain language of this text, as well as several others. He presents us to himself; he keeps Jude 24. us from falling, and presents us in the presence of his own glory with exceeding joy. He reconciles things in heaven; if you understand that of the Angels, it signifies a confirmation in the original happiness of their nature: and he who could establish them

can

can pardon you. If there is grace enough to keep <sup>S E R M.</sup> the Angels from falling, as several thousands of <sup>XXV.</sup> their partners have done, certainly there is sufficient to keep you by the mighty power of this God *thro' faith unto salvation.*

(4.) Here's an argument for your care and love to the people of a Redeemer. If the Angels for his sake are *sent forth as ministring Spirits* to them, will you think it below you to love and attend 'em? Remember, they are *heirs of salvation*, the children of a King, *joint-heirs with Christ*, the price of blood, the candidates for glory. The Spirits that stand round the throne don't think it any reproach to come down among 'em. *They en-* <sup>Pf. xxxiv,</sup> *camp round about them that fear the Lord, to deliver 'em.* <sup>10.</sup>

'Tis strange, that the heavenly guards should pitch their tents upon earth, and do it, not where God's people liv'd in prosperity, but they go to the poorest person, and into the darkest holes. They are employ'd to *shut the lion's mouth in a den*, to fetch an Apostle out of a *dungeon*, to take up a beggar perhaps from a rich man's gates. The last news we heard of *Lazarus*, was, that no creature own'd him besides the *dogs who lick'd his sores*; and the next account tells us he is in the arms of Angels to carry up his soul.

See therefore how aukward a thing that loftiness of temper is that some people love to be distinguish'd by. They never learn'd this from the Angels. It's not the court-air. It's quite out of fashion in heaven, to *despise one of these little ones, for their Angels do always behold the face of our Father which is in heaven.* They have creatures to take care of 'em, who look God in the face. Let these noble examples teach you, as *the elect of God, to put on bowels of* <sup>Col. iii. 12.</sup> *mercy, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.* Learn thus to be generous, to be pitiful and courteous, go-

S E R M ing about like so many Angels upon earth, doing  
XXV. good to all men, especially as they do, *to the household of faith.*

2. We learn from our Lord's being seen of Angels what will be matter of *comfort* to us, under any dangers by a profession, any troubles for the imperfection of grace, our concern in a dying hour, and our unbelief about a resurrection and a future happiness.

(1.) We may be expos'd to great dangers in our profession, as I have already suppos'd. It is your duty to *stand fast in the faith, to quit your selves like men, and be strong*; and if we had no more for it, than the word of our General and Captain of salvation, *Have not I commanded you?* it is enough to a good soldier of Christ. But he has not left himself without a witness; we have arguments of another sort: For as the *battel is the Lord's*, so in a little while you shall know the joys of those that *divide the spoil*. This flows from every fountain of doctrine, all the truths of religion are to give you a *hope in believing*; but there is a particular force in the subject of my text.

You appear for him who has all the Angels in heaven to appear for him. You do not see either him or them, that would confound your zeal, and prevent your faith; but they are about you, tho' invisible. The prophet *Elisba* knew this, when his servant saw the chariots and horses invading the city, he cries out, *Alas, my master, how shall we do?* He has this answer, *Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them.* He might have said, there is a greater force with us, if he had spoke of no more than one Angel; but he really insists upon a *greater number*, as appear'd to be fact; for when the young man's eyes were open'd, *Behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire about Elisba.* Indeed the Apostle goes

2 Kin. vi.  
15, 16.



goes upon a higher argument than this, *Ye are of* S E R M. XXV.  
*God, little children, and have overcome them, because*  
*greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the*  
*world.* And shall they who profess under so glo- 1 John iv. 4.  
 rious a Head, and are join'd with so noble an army,  
 be ashamed of what they do? No, we have a High-  
 priest over the house of God; one who has the govern-  
 ment there, for he is a Priest upon his throne. From  
 this the Apostle makes two conclusions; first, that  
 we draw nigh with a true heart: and, secondly,  
 that we hold fast the profession of our faith without Heb. x. 21; 22.  
 wavering. The one of these is as necessary as the  
 other. A man is as much obliged to keep stand-  
 ing in the field, as kneeling to the throne: and  
 what are we to hold fast? not only our faith, as a  
 principle, or a doctrine, but the very profession of it,  
 ἀκλινῇ, without wavering, without any declen-  
 sion or turning from the truth, as it is in Jesus.  
 This is a part of your homage to that High-priest  
 who is over the house of God.

Remember, therefore, if you contend for the faith  
 once delivered to the saints, you have a good cause,  
 a glorious Head, and a vast alliance: And tho'  
 there are many who turn away their ears from the 2 Tim. iv. 4. 5.  
 truth, and are turn'd unto fables, yet watch in all  
 things, endure afflictions. For there is a crown of  
 righteousness laid up for all those who love his appear-  
 ing. And what appearing is that, but of a righte-  
 teous judge? All Scripture agrees in this, *The hea-* Psal. l. 6.  
*vens declare his righteousness, for God is judge himself.*  
 We come to Jesus the Mediator of the new cove-  
 nant, and to God the judge of all; and therefore,  
 when we look for that blessed hope, it is the glorious  
 appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ.  
 You may well bear a testimony to the character un-  
 der which you expect him. *Enoch, the seventh from* Jud 14. 15.  
*Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord comes*  
*with ten thousands of his Saints, to execute judgment*  
 upon

SER M. upon all, and to convince them of their ungodly deeds,  
XXV. and hard speeches which they have spoken against him.

These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speakes great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration because of advantage.

(2.) We are sometimes troubled at the imperfection of our graces, and the darkness of our evidence; and this sits heavier upon a believer, than all the noise and rattle of the world against him. He does not complain so much, that *without* are fightings, as that *within* are fears. Now the doctrine I'm upon, opens a door of hope in this valley of Achor, and it's this, that tho' Christ do suffer your graces to be weak, and your comforts to be interrupted, yet he that has done so much for the Angels will not be unmindful of you.

In some sense we may suppose them under the fears of falling away. They had no covenant order'd in all things and sure, 'till he reconcil'd to himself what is now in heaven. Now there's one argument, that may encourage our expectation of such a favour above theirs. We may say as the men of Israel did to those of Judah, *We have ten parts in the king, he is nearer of kin to us*: He is rather ours than theirs; for verily  
Heb. ii. 14. *he took not on him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham.* And therefore if he has done so generously by a nature that he never took into the relation, what may not we hope for from him who took part of our flesh and blood? Don't imagine that he who establish'd *them* has left his people here below unsettled; no, the time is a coming on, when your graces shall be like those of the Angels, entire and perfect, and when your comforts shall also equal theirs, both in their fullness and security.

3. This is a support under the terrors of a dying hour. The believer may say, "This is what I'm not us'd to, I have had grace to hear and to pray with, but never to die with. This is following my God *in a way that is not sown*, and a road that I have not trod. Now my feet are coming *upon the dark mountains*. I am to find that which never enter'd into my experience before, and never will do again. I have often resisted Satan, but if the last battel turns on his side, all the rest will prove in vain." I don't tell you such a case ought not to strike you with awe. A man that makes a jest of death, was never in earnest for heaven: But this I will tell you, from him whose word alone you're to take in it, that he whose you are, will never leave you nor forsake you.

Angels have been your *ministring spirits* before, and they will be so at last. You have found their care in a pinching world, you shall have it again. Satan will be your enemy, 'tis the concluding stroke, and therefore may be the most awful. But here are contending Spirits that will give him battel, and they are sent forth to minister unto them who shall be the heirs of salvation. This they have done all along; but their service is with a particular zeal, when those *heirs* are just going to take possession. If they own'd you in a distant title, in a claim that was not to be answer'd for several years, will they be unconcern'd when you get out of minority, and have but a few moments between you and the full inheritance?

(4.) This deserves to be your comfort under any doubts about a resurrection, or a future happiness. He who is *the resurrection and the life*, and is call'd so among other reasons, because it shall be brought about by the power of his voice, and the authority of his command, (He) has Angels to behold him, looking

S E R M.  
XXV.  



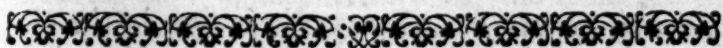

S E R M. looking at his face to take his orders, as well as to  
 XXV. admire his glory. Make no objections about the  
 manner how the graves are to be open'd, and the  
 dust awaken'd into a second life; how souls who  
 have liv'd loose and free in heaven shall come down  
 again into their old habitations. These are myste-  
 ries, and would be no better than dreams, if we  
 had not the word of a *God that cannot lie*.

But the difficulties that appear in such things  
 are gone, if you do but consider that Angels are  
 the officers, and Christ the guide of the whole con-  
 cern. What is there which they cannot execute,  
 2 Thess. i. when he thinks fit to command it? He is *reveal'd*  
 9. *from heaven with his mighty Angels*. And from hence  
 you may also conclude the happiness both of soul  
 and body. He is now *seen of Angels*, and he shall  
 be seen of you. You're his own, *the ransom'd of*  
*the Lord*, which they never were. Tho' he has done  
 more for them in their creation, yet his love and  
 pity has exceeded towards you in redemption; and  
 therefore 'tis no wonder if with his original ser-  
 vants he also bring in his *purchase* and his *chosen*;  
 Rev. xxii. for they, as well as the Angels, *shall see his face,*  
 4. *and his name shall be in their foreheads.*





# SERMON XXVI. Apr. 26. 1719.



I TIM. III. 16.

— *Preached unto the Gentiles.*



IN these words we enter upon the *fourth* S E R M. XXVI.  
*branch* of this great mystery, that promotes our godliness, and secures our salvation. We have heard of Christ, *First*, that he was *manifested*; *Secondly*, that he was *justified*; *Thirdly*, that he was *seen*; and now *Fourthly*, that he is *preach'd of*. These are so many ways of spreading out his name, and serving the mighty purpose of redemption that he came about. His *manifestation* was to all those in *Judea*, who saw him, and heard him: he ever *spake openly* Joh. xviii. 20. *in the temple and synagogues, whither the Jews did always resort*: he was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld him. His *justification* is more inward, and refers us to a secret witness, the testimony that is deliver'd and impress'd upon the souls of his people; for Christ is *in us as our hope* of Col. i. 27. *glory.*

S E R M. *glory. He was manifest in the flesh, by appearing*  
 XXVI. *in the reality of our nature; but he is justified in*  
*the Spirit, which reaches no farther than a princi-*  
*ple of religion does: he's glorified in his Saints, and*  
*admir'd in them that believe.*

But, besides these two, He is *seen* and *preach'd* of.  
 Seen no longer by us: for tho' we have known  
 Christ after the flesh, *henceforth we know him no*  
*more.* The heavens have receiv'd him till the time  
 of the restitution of all things. He's one *whom*  
 [1 Pet. i. 6. *having not seen we love, and in whom, tho' now we*  
 [1 Tim. vi. *see him not, yet believing we rejoyce. He dwells in*  
 16. *the light which none can approach to, whom no man*  
*has seen, nor can see.* But yet he is seen in the glo-  
 ry of his Person, the fulness of his reward, and the  
 vast compass of his design. In all these he is *seen*  
*of Angels*, the things relating to him are what *they*  
 [1 Pet. i. 12. *desire to look into.* They are ministring Spirits a-  
 bout his throne, beholding his face in righteous-  
 ness, and satisfied with his likeness. We at pre-  
 sent are that part of the family that cannot see him:  
 2 Cor. v. *We walk by faith, and not by sight.* He has left our  
 7. world, and keeps in his hands *the keys of the invi-*  
 Rev. i. 18. *sible state*; and therefore in this absence of his Per-  
 son, and the impossibility of having a full vision,  
 he has taken another way to begin, and keep up his  
 acquaintance with us: *He is preach'd among the Gen-*  
*tiles.*

The success of this we have in the next branch  
 of our religion, that *he is believ'd on in the world.*  
 The one is the counterpart to the other. *Preach-*  
*ing* is telling mankind what he is, *believing* is tak-  
 ing in the report, which goes a great deal farther  
 than merely giving our assent to the truth of it;  
 for it moulds and forms the soul to what we hear.  
 2 Cor. iii. *Whilst we look at his glory, we are chang'd into*  
 18. *the same image.* Believing is feeling as well as hear-  
 ing. And this is so much the great business of re-  
 ligion,



ligion; that you find the holy Spirit has given us <sup>S E R M.</sup> two branches of the mystery upon one head of honour that is done to Christ in the world. We <sup>XXVI.</sup> have the means of bringing it about, and that is *preaching* him to the Gentiles; and then the happy event of these methods, that he is *believ'd on* among those that fear him.

I'm now calling your thoughts to the former of these; which, as I said before, contains the fourth branch of the christian religion: He was *preach'd among the Gentiles*. I must observe to you, as I have done all along, that the report is made in the form of a history concerning the same Person who had been mention'd before; so that the method, into which I shall cast my design from this part of the verse, will not be very different from that I have taken in the whole subject.

1. To give you some account of what is here affirm'd, that he was preach'd unto the Gentiles.

2. To shew you that this belongs to him as a GOD; He of whom these things are said, can be no other than the Supreme Being.

3. That there is something in it mysterious and wonderful, exceeding the comprehension of human reason.

4. That the design of this doctrine, and the virtue that attends it, is to promote *godliness* in all manner of conversation: 'tis an opinion that brings forth fruit to account.

I. I'm to explain the thing itself that's here said of Christ Jesus; that the *God* who was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, and seen of Angels, is now *preach'd unto the Gentiles*. There are two particulars under this head.

1. That Christ is *preach'd*: and,

2. That this is done *among the Gentiles*.

S E R M.  
XXVI.

1. What is the import of the expression, that he was preach'd? The word signifies the office of a herald, or, as some think, of an ambassador; and it comprehends no less than this, that he employs people to make him known, and give a publication to the glorious design that he came upon. Thus it is written, saith he to his disciples, and thus it behov'd Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preach'd in his name among all nations, and ye are witnesses of these things. To the same purpose they say, We are witnesses of these things, and so is the holy Ghost. He shew'd himself unto witnesses, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead, and commanded them to preach unto the people, and to testify, it is He who is ordain'd of God to be the judge of quick and dead. The name of preachers that he has given to these his servants, leads us into the nature of their duty, and the tendency it has to bring on the happiness of the world. Their preaching takes into it these following particulars: declaring him to be the only Mediator between God and man; representing his sufficiency to answer all the danger of our souls; doing this in the plainest and most open way; shewing his willingness to save those that are lost; persuading people to come unto him; asserting his right over the whole creation, and especially the church; and doing all this with an eye to that state where his glory shall be seen, and ours be compleat.

Acts xx.

24.

This is preaching: 'tis thus we fulfil the ministry that we have receiv'd, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God. He that puts the brethren in mind of these things, is a good minister, nourish'd up in the words of sound doctrine. Satan would direct our thoughts and zeal to something else; but the Apostle saith to Timothy, Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to 'em, in τὰς τοιαύτας ἔσθι καὶ βίβητι ἐκεῖ, live there,

1 Tim. iv.

6.

ver. 15,

16.

# PREACH'D unto the Gentiles. 371

there, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed <sup>S E R M.</sup> to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in 'em <sup>XXVI.</sup> *ἐν αὐτοῖς* in those fundamental truths which make up that doctrine; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.

(1.) To preach Christ, is to declare that he is the only Mediator between God and man: and when this is preach'd among the Gentiles, it is to turn 'em from the error of their way, and the vile abominations they were got into. They had a multitude of Deities, and as great a number of intercessors; *There be that are called gods, whether in heaven* <sup>1 Cor. viii.</sup> *or in earth, as there be gods many, and Lords many;* <sup>3.</sup> but Christianity was to strike 'em off from all this dangerous impertinence in the greatest concern of their lives, and to tell 'em, that *to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.* These are the main principles of our religion, that there is *but one God,* <sup>1 Tim. ii.</sup> *and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ* <sup>5, 6, 7;</sup> *Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, whereof, saith he, I am ordain'd a Preacher, and an Apostle, a Teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.*

This is that doctrine which he sent his servants round about the world with, that *there is salvation* <sup>Acts iv.</sup> *in no other, nor any other name given under heaven* <sup>12.</sup> *among men by which we can be saved.* It's what he press'd upon the Jews in his own ministry: *All that came before me are thieves and robbers, but the* <sup>Joh. x. 8.</sup> *sheep did not hear 'em: and again, If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.* John the Baptist had before this been like the voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths strait: One comes after me, who is before me: He whom God has sent, speaks the words of God, for God gives not the Spirit by measure to*  

B b 2
him;



S E R M. him ; what he has seen and heard, that he testifies, and  
 XXVI. no man receives his testimony : he that has receiv'd his  
 testimony, has set to his seal that God is true.

Joh. iii.

32, 33.

It's a going off from the simplicity of the christian religion, and indeed the whole design upon which we have it, for us to talk of any other Mediator besides him, who was in all points tempted as we are. He keeps the work intirely in his own hands, and will have it said of none but himself, that he is the way, the truth and the life, and that none comes to the Father but by him. And therefore, it is part of our ministry to shew, that this is He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.

xiv. 6.

1 Pet. i.

20.

He that in the fulness of time was made of a woman, is that seed of the woman who should break the serpent's head, Who was verily fore-ordain'd before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. 'Twas of him whom we now preach, that God spake to the Patriarchs ; for

Gal. iii. 8. the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen thro' faith, preach'd before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. 'Tis he of whom David speaks ;

Acts ii. 30. for he being a prophet knew that God would of his loins raise up Christ to sit on his throne. He is the root that should come forth out of the stem of Jesse, and the branch that should grow out of his roots, the bright and morning star, the root and offspring of David. In a word, it is he who was promis'd of God to the Fathers ; he that should come, neither look we for another. And from this we are never to depart, being servants to God in the Gospel of

Rom. i.

3. 4.

his Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declar'd to be the Son of God with power by the Spirit of holiness in the resurrection from the dead.

(2.) When we preach Christ, we represent him as sufficient to answer all the danger that our souls are

are

are in. The poor heathen had a wild way of explaining the fall of man, and the redemption that God is carrying on, and yet they had some confus'd apprehensions about it. They saw that he who made 'em was angry with 'em; they felt a depravity in their manners; they strove to procure the Divine favour by sacrifice and offering; and the more devout any people were, the greater expence did they run into; so that the doctrine of original sin, and a satisfaction to the justice of God, seems to have made some general impressions upon our whole nature. They knew so much, that we had undone ourselves, and that it was not in our own power to become happy again.

Now, we must tell the heathen, and all mankind, that every contrivance to set ourselves aright with God, fell short of the design. We have nothing wherewith to *come before the Lord, and bow ourselves to the most high God; thousands of rams, and ten thousand rivers of oyl* was a great deal for us to give, but too little for him to take. Giving *the first-born for our transgression, the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul,* was the highest act of self-denial; but it could be no better than atoning for one sin by another, for a less by a greater. Christianity is to tell the world that all this will not do, that such a profusion of treasure and blood may be spar'd for two reasons. *First*, because they are not sufficient to answer the ends: and, *Secondly*, because there is something else to prevent 'em. Christ has by one offering, for ever perfected them that are sanctified. The devotions under the law were to be repeated yearly, monthly, and daily; but as they had no more than a typical virtue, so the substance they refer to being come, there's an end of 'em: *Thro' this man is preach'd the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified*

S E R M.  
XXVI.



Mic. vi.  
6, 7.

Acts xiii.  
38, 39.

# 374 PREACH'D unto the Gentiles.

S E R M. *from all things; from which they could not be justified*  
 XXVI. *by the law of Moses.*

*We are to tell mankind, that here is One able*  
 Heb. vii. *to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by*  
 25. *him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them:*  
 ix. 26. *that there needs no more sacrifice by way of atone-*  
*ment. He appear'd once in the end of the world, to*  
*put away sin by the offering of himself. He is a high*  
*priest of good things to come; and not by the*  
*blood of bulls and goats, which being imperfect,*  
*must be renew'd, but by his own blood he enter'd in-*  
*to the holiest of all, having obtain'd eternal redemption*  
*for us.*

*And as he has carried along with him a merit*  
*that will be the foundation of perpetual claims, so*  
*he has the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him*  
*bodily. He wants for no grace to make you a*  
 Col. ii. 10. *willing people, no more than for a righteousness to*  
*make you a pardon'd people: You are complete in*  
*him who is the head of all principality and power.*  
*He can begin his work upon the most unlikely per-*  
 Jude 1. *sons, he can carry it on thro' the greatest dangers;*  
*for we are preserv'd in Christ Jesus, and call'd.*  
 1 Joh. v. *This is the good news that we bring to a desolate*  
 19. *world which lies in wickedness, ὑπὸ τῆς πονηρίας*  
*under the power of the wicked one, to tell 'em*  
*that they may be sav'd, that God has laid help on*  
*him that is mighty; an interpreter, one among a*  
*thousand. He is gracious to 'em, having found*  
 Rom. viii. *out a ransom, and so they are deliver'd from going*  
 4. *down to the pit. We tell the Jews, that what the*  
*law could not do, in that it was weak thro' the flesh,*  
*is now brought about in a better and an easier way.*  
*God has sent forth his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,*  
*and by making him a sacrifice for sin, has condemn'd*  
*it in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be*  
*fulfill'd in them that walk not after the flesh, but af-*  
*ter the Spirit.*

3. Preaching



(3.) Preaching Christ is telling these things in the plainest and most open way we can. The ministry of *John the Baptist* is call'd φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ the voice of one crying or shouting in the wilderness. 'Tis the publication that he gives to the world, as it was foretold in the very prophesie that refers to *John*; *The voice said, Cry: O Zion, that bringest good tydings, get thee up into the high mountain, from whence they may spread out the report, O Jerusa'em, that bringest good tydings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid, say to the cities of Judah, BEHOLD YOUR GOD.*

E R M.  
XXVI.

The doctrine we are charg'd with in particular, is the Deity of our Saviour. All the descriptions that we have of the ministerial work, represent it as contriv'd on purpose to tell the news abroad: *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tydings, that publishes peace, that brings good tydings of good, that publishes sa'vation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord brings again Zion. The Lord has made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our GOD.* Therefore for us to be either afraid or unwilling to testifie of him whom we are sent out to proclaim, is not making full proof of our ministry; tis actually undoing what we are set apart for. For a necessity is laid upon us, yea, woe unto us, if we preach not the Gospel. We have in Christ Jesus the great example, as well as the glorious object of our ministry: *I have preached righteousness, saith he, in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest: I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declar'd thy faithfulness and thy salvation, I have not conceal'd thy loving kindness, and thy truth from the great congregation.*

lii. 7, 8.  
10.

i Cor. ix.  
16.

Ps. xl. 10.

S E R M.  
XXVI.

Ministers are set for the defence of the Gospel as well as morality. As they must blow the trumpet to warn sinners, and bid 'em turn from the evil of their ways, lest that blood be requir'd at their hands; so when the time comes that people will not endure sound doctrine, they are to watch in all things. to endure afflictions, to do the work of evangelists, and make full proof of their ministry. There is such a thing as betraying the faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints; and if this is the crime of those who are charg'd to hold fast the faithful word, what can they expect when the chief Shepherd shall appear?

2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.

It is an argument, and a very powerful one to flesh and blood, that the doctrines of the Gospel being run down as nonsense, cannot be maintain'd without danger; but a minister, who has any use of that faith that he talks of, who makes that world the place of his conversation, which is the subject of his report, will have an answer to every objection that rises from below: Bonds and afflictions, saith the Apostle, do in every city abide me, but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and fulfil the ministry that I have receiv'd, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God. He charges the Colossians

Acts xx. 24.

Col. iv. 17.

Eph. iii. 9.

No, it's our business to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery that from the beginning of the world has been hid in God.

We are so far from being asham'd to talk of mysteries, tho' we are laugh'd at for it, that we must tell 'em our ministry consists of these, and we endeavour to make 'em see 'em, and what fellowship there is in 'em; that there is something communi-

cated

cated by such doctrines, and deriv'd from 'em. Tho' they are above the comprehension of reason, yet they are prepar'd to nourish and feed the soul. Whether people will hear, or whether they will forbear, we must let 'em know, that Christianity is a great deal more than the best instructions for duty, and lessons for practice. There is an unintelligible part in it, what the Apostle here calls a *mystery*, that from the beginning was hid with Christ in God.

It is no argument for us to be silent upon these heads, because the world will not *endure sound doctrine*. When a truth is run down, it's a time for you to *hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering*. You must not *believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world*. The Apostle Paul had as much prudence as any man, and yet you find how he conducts himself in his ministry. When he is call'd to preach before *Felix*, the pride and injustice of that person direct him to speak of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. When he came to *Athens*, he struck at their darling practice; for in all things they were too *superstitious*, and tells 'em, *The God whom ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you, for we ought not to think the Godhead is like to silver and gold: he dwells not in temples made with hands*. And even among them he preaches *Christ Jesus, and the resurrection from the dead*, tho' they had call'd him a *babbler, and a setter forth of strange Gods*. And when he comes upon this subject again, as he speaks of the *resurrection*, some *mocked*, and others said, *We will hear thee again of this matter*. When he preach'd to the *Jews*, he knew no doctrine would be so grating to them as *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. This was their *stone of stumbling*, the thing they could not get over, and yet thus he employ'd his ministry.

S E R M.  
XXVI.

1 Joh. iv.  
1.

Acts xvii.  
22, 25.



# 378 PREACH'D unto the Gentiles.

SER M. try among 'em. When he went to *Thessalonica*, as  
 XXVI. his manner was, he goes into the synagogue, open-  
 ing and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffer'd,  
 Acts xvii. and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ.  
 3. Thus he did to the Jews at Rome, tho' they con-  
 tradicted and blasphem'd the things that he spake, yet  
 he held on. No reputation of his own was of a-  
 ny value with him; he threw all that into the fu-  
 ture glory.

'Tis a poor reason for ministers to conceal their  
 faith, because others will not hear it. We read of  
 Gal. ii. 4, quite another conduct: *Certain false brethren were*  
 5. *unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out*  
*the liberty that we have in Christ Jesus, that they might*  
*bring us into bondage, to whom we gave place by sub-*  
*jection, no not for an hour, that the truth of the Gospel*  
*might continue with you.* You see it was this that  
 he had most at heart; and there's no fulfilling of  
 our ministry, without a faithfulness to it. He  
 could not have bid the elders of *Ephesus* farewell  
 with that confidence, if he had not born his testi-  
 mony against all opposition: for, after the manner  
 of men, he fought with beasts at *Ephesus*. But he  
 Acts xx. could say at parting, *I take you to record this day,*  
 17. *that I am pure from the blood of all men.* Why! for  
*I have not shunn'd to declare unto you all the counsel*  
*of God.* He did not shun to declare any part of  
 it. The counsel of God certainly takes in the my-  
 steries of religion, and in particular the glory of  
 Christ, whose names are *Wonderful, Counsellor.* Had  
 he shunn'd to declare this, he had been guilty, pol-  
 luted with the blood of men. But upon the open-  
 ness of his ministry about *these things*, he calls them  
 to record, that he was pure: that whatever blot he  
 went away with, there could be none upon the  
 account of any unfaithfulness in his work. He  
 might have a great deal of the reproach of men,  
 but none of their blood stuck to him; that fell all  
 upon

upon their own heads. "There's nothing that I  
 "can have more dread of in my ministry, than  
 "that I should have said too little of Christ, and  
 "not have been zealous enough for the glory  
 "of his name." Happy are they who are wit-  
 nesses for him, and neither ashamed of his person  
 nor his words before an adulterous and sinful gene-  
 ration. They shall find that he will be a faithful  
 and true witness to them. *Who is that faithful and*  
*wise servant, whom his Lord has made ruler over his*  
*household, to give 'em their meat in due season? Blessed*  
*is that servant whom his Lord when he comes shall*  
*find so doing: verily I say unto you, that he shall make*  
*him ruler over all his goods.*

S E R M.  
XXVI.

Mat. xxiv.  
45. 46,  
47.

(4.) We preach Christ as one who is willing to  
 seek and save that which is lost. We cannot leave  
 out his goodness when we talk of a Redeemer:  
*Herein he has commended his love towards us, in that*  
*when we were yet sinners, he died for us.* We are  
 indeed to insist upon the terrors of the Lord, that,  
 as many as are under the law, are under the curse:  
 that a satisfaction must be made to the justice of  
 God; for, *without shedding of blood there is no re-*  
*mission.* But these things are so far from contra-  
 dicting what is said of the love of Christ, that  
 they rather exalt it. We cannot have a greater  
 evidence of the regard he has to our nature, than  
 when he was pleas'd to live in it, and to die with it.  
 That he came down a little lower than the Angels,  
 not (as Adam was made) to live in all the fulness of  
 paradise; but *for the suffering of death, that thro'*  
*that he might destroy him who has the power of death;*  
*that is the Devil, and deliver them who thro' fear of*  
*death are all their life-time subject to bondage.* What  
 an example was here of a good will towards  
 men!

(5.) Our preaching of Christ signifies the pains  
 we are at in persuading people to come to him.  
 We

# 380 PREACH'D unto the Gentiles.

S E R M. We are ambassadors for Christ, as tho' God did be-  
 XXVI. seech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead be ye  
 2 Cor. v. reconcil'd unto God. We must follow you with  
 20. the doctrines of godliness, that God was manifest

in the flesh: and what is the expostulation that a-  
 rises out of it but this? *Why will ye die, O house of*  
 Heb. vi. *Israel?* We tell you there is hope in *Israel* con-  
 18. cerning this thing. You may flee for a refuge, to  
 lay hold upon the hope set before you: and will you not  
 come to him that ye may have life?

Indeed we are cloath'd with a great authority,  
 or rather are the heralds of *his*. He has told us  
 what to say in a way of demand, and in a way of  
 threatning. We tell you that He whom you serve  
 is over all, *God blessed for ever*: that he will be a  
 swift witness against his enemies, that whoever be-  
 2 Cor. v. lieves not is condemn'd already, and *the wrath of*  
 10. *God abides on him*. But tho' these are terrors of  
 the Lord, we know and use 'em to *persuade men*.  
 We call 'em to flee from a wrath to come; and  
 in doing this, we must be suppos'd to tell 'em,

that a way is found out, *a new and living one*; new  
 Heb. x. 19. in opposition to that which the great God had  
 once establish'd, and which our first parents had  
 broke, and therefore is now stopt up; and then it  
 is a living way, as no death can come there, as  
 life flows and streams out from it, as it has a vital  
 influence upon those that enter into it, and as it  
 leads into the life of another world. Thus our  
 preaching is not only a display of doctrine to your  
 understanding, but of argument to your affections,  
 that you may receive both the knowledge and *the*  
*love of the truth*, and so may be sav'd. This is  
 preaching of Christ Jesus.

(6.) We assert his authority over the whole cre-  
 ation, and especially over the churches: that *he has*  
 Isa. ix. 7. *the government upon his shoulders*, that *all power is*  
 Mat. *given to him in heaven and in earth*. This is an article  
 xxviii. *that*  
 18.



that we must by no means part with. He wills E R M.  
 never give his glory to another, and it is a breach XXVI.  
 of trust for us to do it: *We preach not ourselves, but* 2 Cor. iv.  
*Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for* 6.  
*Jesus sake.* His empire over the world is not so  
 clearly seen as it will be; but that over the churches  
 we must make as visible as we can, by owning no  
 other authority. He speaks to his disciples of  
*things pertaining to the kingdom of God* in so ample a Acts i. 2.  
 way, that the dispensation we are under is complete:  
*You need not that any man teach you, but the same* Joh. ii.  
*anointing teaches you all things; and this is truth, and* 28.  
*no lye.* This is the cause of God, to which his  
 servants have born a testimony; and *they have over-* Rev. xii.  
*come by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their* 11.  
*testimony.* I will only add one note here, that sure-  
 ly asserting the Divinity of Christ ought not to  
 be call'd a denying this authority. 'Tis strange  
 that those people who do not believe his godhead,  
 should set up for the best friends to his empire. My  
 saying that he is equal with the Father, can never  
 be inconsistent with a belief that he is Head over  
 all things to the church.

(7.) In this preaching of Christ, we have an eye  
 to that state, where *his* glory shall be seen, and *ours*  
 complete: *Whom we preach, warning every man, and* Col. i. 28.  
*teaching every man, that we may present every man*  
*perfect in Christ Jesus.* For this end we make him  
 known, that you may *press on to the mark for the* Phil. iii.  
*prize of the high calling.* We tell you that which 14.  
 the natural man despises, and which the very peo-  
 ple of God cannot think of without an awful con-  
 fusion. We know but in part, and therefore can  
 but *prophecie in part: but when that which is perfect* 1 Cor. iii.  
*is come, that which is in part shall be done away.* 17.  
 When we have our resemblance of his Person, we  
 shall be fitted to all the joys of meditation, being  
 made like him by seeing him as he is. The rejoicing Joh. iii.  
 that 2.

S. E. R. M. that we hope for, is, in the day of Christ Jesus,  
XXVII. that we have not run in vain, nor preach'd in vain.

Phil. ii.  
16.



May 10.  
1719.

## SERMON XXVII.

2.  HE other part of the truth contain'd in this text, is, that he was *preach'd unto the GENTILES*; by whom we are to understand all the rest of the world, who had been by the providence of God a long while distinguish'd from one particular people; for when he gaye the word to *Jacob*, and his statutes
- Psal. cxlvii. *to Israel, he dealt not so with any other nation. Moses*
19. *appeals to them as possessing the grand peculiar of all history, having that in their experience which*
- Deut. iv. *was never known any where else. Ask now of the*
- 32.—35. *days that are past, which were before thee since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one side of the heaven to the other, whether there has been any such thing as this great thing is, or has been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire, as thou hast heard and live? Or hath God assay'd to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, and by signs, and by wonders, by wars, by a mighty hand, and an outstretch'd arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was shew'd. He turns very often upon this great privilege in that long discourse.*
- vii. 6. *Thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God has chosen thee to be a special people to himself, above all people that are on the face of the earth.*

This argument God himself uses by way of re-  
 proach to them who had so many distinctions in  
 their lot, and so few in their carriage. *Hear this*  
*word that the Lord has spoken against you, O ye chil-*  
*dren of Israel, against the whole family which I brought*  
*up out of the land of Egypt; you only have I known*  
*of all the families of the earth, therefore you will I*  
*punish for your iniquities.* Nor does the great Apo-  
 stle of the Gentiles deny this, tho' his ministry was  
 directed at the levelling all those peculiarities, and  
 shewing the world that now they were at an end.  
 Yet when he puts the question, *What profit has the*  
*Jew, and what advantage is there in circumcision?* He  
 answers, *Much every way, chiefly because to them were*  
*committed the oracles of God.* And in the time that  
 his soul was in all that agony about them, that he  
 had great heaviness, and continual sorrow in his heart, that  
 he could wish himself accur'd from Christ, for his  
 brethren, his kinsmen, according to the flesh; yet he  
 owns, that to them pertained the adoption, and the  
 glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and  
 the service of God, and the promises.

Theirs alone was the adoption, no other people  
 were accounted children, but rather spoke of as  
 dogs, according to the phrase that our Lord us'd,  
 when the woman of Canaan came to him. Theirs  
 was the glory that fill'd the tabernacle and the temple,  
 and appear'd in the holiest of all. These were  
 things not so much as talk'd of in any other place  
 besides Judah, where God was well known, and  
 his name was great in Israel, in Salem was his ta-  
 bernacle, and Sion was his seat. Theirs were the  
 covenants, God never profess'd a relation to any peo-  
 ple but them, having taken Jacob to himself, and  
 Israel for his peculiar treasure. They were a peo-  
 ple near unto the Lord, and concerning whom, he  
 proclaim'd what he did no where else, that he  
 would be to them a God, and they should be to  
 him

S E R M.  
 XXVII.  
 Amos iii.  
 1, 2.

Rom. iii  
 1, 2.

ix. 2, 3, 4.

Psal. lxxvi.  
 1, 2.



# 384 Preach'd unto the GENTILES.

S E R M. him a people. To them pertain'd *the giving of the*  
 XXVII. *law*: Never were statutes deliver'd with a purity  
 unallay'd, and with a thunder undisguis'd, but a-  
 mong them. Other nations were left to *walk after*  
*their own ways*, but to them God himself came  
 down, Angels attending him, clouds and darkness  
 covering the place, voices and flames diffusing the  
 authority. *He came with ten thousand of his saints*:  
 Deut. xxxiii. 2. *from his right hand went a fiery law for 'em*. Theirs  
 were the *promises*, the *covenants of promise* were of  
 Eph. ii. 12. the same extent with the *commonwealth of Israel*.  
 For tho' God did not leave himself without wit-  
 ness to others, in giving 'em rain and fruitful sea-  
 sons, filling their hearts with food and gladness;  
 yet to these he open'd out the great design of re-  
 deemming the world. This is call'd *the hope of Israel*;  
 for tho' it came with a benefit to all mankind, yet  
 the *Jews* alone could be said to hope for it, and  
 none but *the twelve tribes instantly serving God day*  
*and night* had any ground to expect it. And the  
 reason is plain from what the Apostle advances fur-  
 ther, *Theirs were the fathers*, men who in several  
 ages waited for the consolation of *Israel*. The pro-  
 phets, in whom the *Spirit of Christ* did testify, were  
 of their country. All the light that was given to  
 the world concerning a Mediator came from them.  
 And out of them *Christ himself* arose according to the  
 flesh. When he took upon him our nature, he ap-  
 pear'd in their country. He was of the seed of  
 Abraham, and the family of David, and came in  
 person to none but *his own*. There he had his  
 house, *The Lord came suddenly to his temple*. He  
 was the messenger of the covenant that God had  
 made with them, and they alone profess'd any de-  
 light in him. He was rais'd up as a *horn of salvation*  
*in the house of his servant David*. And though he  
 came as a light to lighten the *Gentiles*, yet he was  
 in a particular manner *the glory of his people Israel*.

So

## Preach'd unto the GENTILES. 385

So that you see the world was for a long S E R M.  
time thus unequally divided into *Jews* and *Gentiles*. XXVII.  
By the former, no more was meant than a single nation; confin'd within narrow bounds. These were the favourites of heaven; and the greatest part of our nature was all the rest of the world. Now when Christ was manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit, and seen of Angels, (they saw him up to his throne) he determin'd to widen his empire. He sat down on God's right hand, that from thence he might *send the rod of his strength out of Zion*, and have a *willing people in the day of his power*: He was to *judge among the heathen, and wound the heads over many countries*. He therefore orders those whom he had put into the ministry, to preach him among the *Gentiles*, where he was never heard of, not so much as expected, or at least not with those grounds of hope and clearness of evidence under which he had been reveal'd to the *Jews*. Psal. cxl. 1, 2, 6.

This is one branch of the mystery of godliness, that they who knew him not before, should have the joyful sound ringing in their ears. I am not yet got so far into my subject, to consider this under the notion that the text gives us of it, as a wonder and a *mystery*. I will therefore only pursue this one observation in two parts; *first*, that till the Gospel came to be preach'd, God was all along narrowing the interest of religion, bringing it into straiter bounds: but *secondly*, from the time of our Lord's ascension, he took quite other methods, enlarging both his interest and the ways of promoting it.

1. You will see by going over some historical accounts, that 'till the Gospel came to be preach'd in this last and best edition, religion confin'd and drew in it self by every new dispensation. As for example,

C c

1. When

S E R M.  
XXVII.Gen. iii.  
15.

Heb. xi. 3.

Gen. iv.  
ult.

vi. 3.

12, 13.

(1.) When God had reveal'd that promise, which was the blooming Gospel, that *the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, as it was delivered to our first parents, so it equally concern'd all their posterity. But we are soon told, in process of time, that tho' *Cain* had some notions of natural religion, yet he was a stranger to the mystery and benefit of what had been reveal'd. For *by faith Abel offer'd a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtain'd witness, that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts*. After his murder, *Seth* was born, as another seed, instead of *Abel*, whom *Cain* slew; and when he had a son, who was nam'd *Enos*, then began men to call on the name of the Lord.

There were then two societies. They that serv'd God in a right manner, liv'd separate from the rest. *Cain's* posterity, though they are remember'd for the invention of several arts, yet succeeded to the lot of their father, from the divine presence they were hid. When this distinction wore out, that *the sons of God* (*Seth's* race) *went in to the daughters of men*, it first confounded religion, making all wickedness run loose, and then it brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly. As they were alike in practice, God makes 'em alike in vengeance.

*All flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth, and God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me.*

(2.) After the flood, when our whole nature consisted of no more than what came out of the Ark, *Noah* had three sons, *Shem*, *Ham* and *Japhet*, and it's only the first of these among whom the true worship was maintain'd. For tho' God would persuade *Japhet*, and make him dwell in the tents of *Shem*, yet many ages roll'd off before that design took place. And as for *Ham*, he and his posterity were under a curse, and doom'd to be servants of servants to their brethren; so that here seem'd to be another



another straitning in religion. In *Adam's* family S E R M. XXVII.  
 God had one in two, in *Noah's* he had no  
 more than one in three; and thus it held for a  
 great many generations, till the fulness of time  
 came to bring his sons from far, and his daughters  
 from the ends of the earth.

(3.) Even *Shem's* family grew degenerate and pol-  
 luted; for tho' they did not run into the wick-  
 edness of the *Canaanites*, which made *Abraham* send  
 among them for a wife to his son, yet they were  
 guilty of idolatry, as you may learn from what  
*Joshua* tells the *Jews*, Your fathers dwelt on the Josh. xxiv. 2.  
 other side of the flood in old time, even *Terah* the father  
 of *Abraham*, and the father of *Nachor*, and served  
 other gods. And afterwards when he puts them  
 to their choice, he mentions the gods which their  
 fathers serv'd on the other side of the flood.

Here then religion lodges it self in a single fa-  
 mily, as the Martyr *Stephen* observes, The God of Acts vii. 2.  
 glory appeared to our father *Abraham* in *Mesopotamia*,  
 before he dwelt in *Charran*. He is separated from all  
 the rest of the earth. We read in his first remove,  
 that his father *Terah*, and his Nephew *Lot* came  
 with him, under some convictions of their former  
 error. *Nachor* they leave behind 'em, from whence  
 the family was supplied with wives in two gene-  
 rations after. *Terah* dies in *Haran*, *Abraham* there-  
 fore and *Lot* were left alone in the possession of the  
 true religion. When his father was dead, he remo- Acts vii. 4.  
 ved him into this land wherein you now dwell. *Lot*,  
 upon a quarrel, separates from *Abraham*, and goes  
 to *Sodom*; and tho' he was a righteous man, yet  
 we read of no good among his posterity. But the  
 promise is given to *Abraham* after *Lot* was parted  
 from him; and all the land he saw eastward and  
 westward and northward and southward was en-  
 sur'd to him and his seed, as distinguish'd from  
 those of his relations. The children of *Lot* are

# 388 Preach'd unto the GENTILES.

S E R M. number'd among the heathen. *The Ammonite*  
 XXVII. *and Moabite were not to enter into the congrega-*  
 Deut. xxiii. *tion of the Lord, till their tenth generation; so that*  
 3. *there was ground enough for that advice. Look*  
 Isa. li. 1, 2. *unto the hole whence you are hewen, and the rock out*  
*of which ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your fa-*  
*ther, and unto Sarah that bare you, for I called him*  
 ALONE, and blessed him, and increas'd him.

(4.) Here is still a farther narrowing of the di-  
 vine interest; for tho' *Abraham's* whole family  
 were taken into an external covenant, during his  
 own days, yet one half of them are cut off after-  
 wards. *Ishmael* was a child of many prayers, *O*  
*that he may live in thy sight*, and was blessed, *because*  
*he was Abraham's seed*, yet the covenant is made  
 only with *Isaac*; and therefore we find his poste-  
 rity number'd among the crowd of enemies  
 against whom the Church of God were defending  
 Ps. lxxxiii. themselves by prayer. *Gebal and Ammon, and A-*  
 6, 7, 8. *malek, the Philistines with them of Tyre, the Taberna-*  
*cles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites, of Moab, and the*  
*Hagarenes: Assur also is join'd with them, and they*  
*have helped the children of Lot.* Many of these peo-  
 ple descended from those parents, who once profes-  
 sed the true religion. But this partition in *Abra-*  
*ham's* family was so remarkable, that the Apostle  
 makes it an allusion to the greatest distinction that  
 is in the world, viz. between hypocrites and true  
 Gal. iv. 22, believers. *Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-*  
 23, 24. *woman, and the other by a free-woman; he that was*  
*of the bond-woman, was born after the flesh, but he*  
*of the free-woman was by promise; which things are*  
*an allegory; for these are the two covenants, one from*  
*mount Sinai, which genders to bondage; and we bre-*  
*thren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise.*

(5.) Here's a farther limitation; for tho' *Isaac* had  
 the promise renew'd to him, *That in his seed should*  
*all the families of the earth be blessed*, yet that's only  
 to

to be understood of one half. He had two sons, *Eſau* S E R M. XXVII. and *Jacob*, and whilst the children were not yet born, neither had done either good or evil, that the promise of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calls, it was said, *The elder ſhall ſerve the younger.* Tho' both of them had a religious education, yet the benefits of it are very much confin'd to one of the branches. Indeed it's probable, that ſome of *Eſau's* poſterity kept up the worſhip of the true God, and that *Job* and his friends might be of that deſcent. But this wore out after a few generations, and there was room enough for God to ſay, *Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated.* They run down into groſs idolatry; they were call'd the border of wickedneſs, and the people Rom. ix. 11, 12. against whom the Lord had indignation for ever. Mal. i. 4.

(6.) *Jacob's* whole family indeed remain poſſeſs'd of the true religion, and all the twelve tribes are brought out of *Egypt*; but in *Jeroboam's* time ten of 'em fall off both from their King and their God: They wander into all the abominations of the heathen, ſo that there are but two tribes in which the Lord God of *Israel* is own'd, according to his inſtitutions. He rent *Israel* from the houſe of *David*, and they made *Jeroboam*, the ſon of *Nebat*, king, and *Jeroboam* drave *Israel* from following the Lord, and made them ſin a great ſin. *Ephraim* com-2 Kin. xvii. 21. paſſed God about with lies, and the houſe of *Israel* with deceit; but *Judah* was faithful to the Lord, and ruled among the Saints. Thy calf, O *Samaria*, has caſt thee off, mine anger is kindled againſt them, how long will it be ere they attain to innocency? And this diſtinction held in ſome meaſure even after the captivity: For, Hof. xi. 12.

(7.) Whether the ten tribes return'd with the two or not, as to me it ſeems probable they did, yet you find in a little time they revive the old prejudice, The *Samaritans* were ſuppos'd by the



S E R M. *Jews* not to be of the stock of *Israel*, but it's plain  
 XXVII. they always claim'd it. Thus the woman of *Sa-*  
 Joh. iv. 12. *maria* talks to our Lord, *Art thou greater than our*  
*father Jacob, who gave us this well, and drank there-*  
 ver. 25. *of, he and his cattel?* And she speaks as a sharer in  
 the great hope of *Israel*, *We know that the Messiah*  
*comes, and when he is come, he will teach us all things.*  
 But yet, whatever honour they might have from  
 their genealogy, it's plain they were of a different  
 cast from the *Jews* in their religion: This appears  
 by the woman's confession, *Our fathers worshipped*  
*in this mountain, and ye say Jerusalem is the place*  
*where men ought to worship.* And the quarrel be-  
 tween them had run so high, that *the Jews had no*  
*dealings with the Samaritans.* But the smallness of  
 the channel is what our Lord himself makes evi-  
 dent, when he tells the woman, who talk'd of their  
 father *Jacob*, and the expected Messiah, *Ye worship*  
*ye know not what, we know what we worship, for sal-*  
*vation is of the Jews.*

(8.) There seems to be a yet narrower distinc-  
 tion: For the people who liv'd at some distance from  
 the temple, though there was no dispute of their  
 lineal descent, are accounted afar off. Thus it is  
 said of the inhabitants in *Galilee*, where our Lord  
 went about in his ministry, that *they sat in dark-*  
*ness, and in the region of the shadow of death.* They  
 call'd it *Galilee of the Gentiles*; perhaps not only to  
 signify that it was populous, but to tell us that  
 they were almost sunk down into the distress of  
 the heathen. This was a country so remote from  
 all religious fame, that as no good thing was ever  
 expected out of *Nazareth*, so they bid *Nicodem-*  
 Joh. vii. *us search and look, for no prophet arises out of Ga-*  
 ult. *lilee.* So that you see, at the time of our Lord's  
 coming into the world, there was little of the  
 true worship, except in *Jerusalem*, and a very small  
 circuit of land round about it.

Thus

## Preach'd unto the GENTILES. 391

Thus the promise that was first given to *Adam* SER M.  
 at large, as design'd for his whole posterity, is re- XXVII.  
 garded among his sons, only by one of the two;   
 among *Noah's* by one of the three; among *Shem's*  
 by a single family; among *Abraham's* *Ishmael* is  
 broke off, and *Isaac* chosen; of the sons of *Isaac* the  
 first-born *Esau* is rejected; of *Jacob's* twelve only  
 two remain'd in the right profession. And tho'  
 these may be suppos'd to spread abroad into the  
 country, yet the worship of the true God lay in  
 a little compass among them. Thus was the em-  
 pire of Christ narrowing it self for many ages, as  
 if he had lov'd, not a diffusion, but a con-  
 finement. Divine providence seem'd to take de-  
 light in striking off people; and every new dispen-  
 sation, though it made the covenant brighter, yet  
 it made the application of it straiter; and when it  
 lay in the least compass, then was *the fulness of time* Gal. iv. 4.  
*that God sent forth his son, made of a woman, and*  
*made under the law.* But,

2. From that period the divine mercy enter-  
 ed into other measures. You may then see how  
 religion widen'd in pursuance of antient pro-  
 phecies.

(1.) Our Saviour was *a minister of the circumcision*, Rom. xv.  
 and only *sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, 8.  
 but yet even then he gave a dawn of his being  
*preach'd among the Gentiles*. His chief conversation  
 at first was in *Galilee*, and the places beyond *Jor-  
 dan*; upon them as the prophet foretold, *a great  
 light* was made to shine. *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*,  
 cities remote from *Jerusalem*, had *mighty works* done  
 in them; and *Capernaum*, which had never been  
 heard of for religion, was *exalted to heaven*: Nay,  
 at *Nazareth* he taught in their *synagogues*, being glo-  
 rify'd of all. Luk. iv. 15.

S E R M. Still farther you find, that tho' he once order'd  
 XXVII. his seventy disciples *not to enter into any village or*  
 Joh. iv. 4. *city of the Samaritans*, yet it's observ'd of himself,  
 that *he must needs go thro' Samaria*; not meerly for  
 the conversion of a poor woman, who publish'd  
 her faith as soon as ever she had it, *Is not this the*  
*Christ?* But many others in that city believ'd on  
 him upon a greater ground than her testimony;  
 ver. 42. who said, *He has told me all that ever I did; they*  
*heard him themselves, and knew that this was indeed*  
*the Christ, the Saviour of the world.* In his conver-  
 sation he shew'd no abhorrence of that poor despi-  
 cable people. He let it be known, that mercy  
 had found a way to them. Thus the man, who was  
 robb'd and wounded in going down to Jericho,  
 and had been neglected by a Priest and a Levite, is  
 reliev'd by a Samaritan; and of the ten lepers that  
 were cleans'd, there was *but one who return'd, and*  
*with a loud voice glorified God, and he was a Sama-*  
*ritan.*

Nay, he went farther, and gave some dawn to  
 the conversion of the Gentiles. He saith concern-  
 ing the piety of the Ruler, *I have not found so*  
*great faith, no not in Israel*; and upon that observes  
 Matt. viii. that *many shall come from the east, and the west, and*  
 10, 11. *the north, and the south, and sit down with Abraham,*  
*Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of God, when the children*  
*of the kingdom are cast out.* The poor Syrophenician wo-  
 man that follow'd him with her importunity, and  
 whom at first he would not answer, and after-  
 wards she is call'd no better than a dog, has this  
 noble character given of her at last, *O woman, great*  
*is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

Joh. xii. But we have still a more copious instance: *There*  
 20. *were certain Greeks that came to worship at the feast, these*  
*come to Philip, and desire to see Jesus.* Upon that  
 ver. 23, 24. our Lord makes this remark, *The hour is come that*  
*the Son of man should be glorified; verily I say unto*  
*you,*



you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and SER M.  
die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much XXVII.  
fruit. He farther tells 'em, that this enquiry of  
the Greeks was the presage of an opening glory;  
not that it would appear very much till after his  
death; for he compares himself and his interest to  
a grain of wheat, which is multiplied by its seem-  
ing to be lost. The ground that buries it revives  
and encreases it: And thus, though he should for  
some time abide alone, yet after his sufferings it  
would be seen, that dying was only the spreading  
out of an enlarged life.

(2.) Accordingly at his death, he took away all  
that which had kept up the distinction between  
Jew and Gentile, and so laid the foundation for  
their having the Gospel. It was impossible that such  
a religion as the Jews had should be spread with  
any great success among the Gentiles. Much of it  
was local; they must go to appear before the Lord  
three times in the year. There was but one Temple for  
all the world, but one High-priest, and but one  
place which the Lord had chosen to put his name  
there. Now, if the duty of people consisted  
in going thither, it must be a great toil and ex-  
pence to the nations afar off, and therefore he a-  
bolish'd in his flesh the enmity, even the law of com- Eph. ii. 15.  
mandments contain'd in ordinances, for to make in him- 16.  
self of twain one new man, so making peace to recon-  
cile both unto God in one body by the cross, having  
slain the enmity thereby. The typical meaning of  
all their services being answer'd, there's now an end  
of them. Neither at Jerusalem, nor any other Joh. iv. 23.  
mountain, do we worship the Father; for if we do it  
in spirit and in truth, 'tis enough; the Father seeks  
such to worship him. I will that men do every where 1 Tim. ii.  
lift up holy hands without wrath or doubting. We 2.  
may perceive God is no respecter of persons. Acts x. 34.

## 394 *Preach'd unto the GENTILES.*

SER M. (3.) He gave orders to his disciples soon after the  
 XXVII. resurrection, that they might be witnesses for him  
 in *Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost*  
 Mar. xvi. *ends of the earth.* Go, saith he, and *disciple all na-*  
 16. *tions, preach the Gospel to every creature.* Indeed he  
 charges 'em to *begin at Jerusalem*, that they might  
 have the first offer, and his resurrection appear in  
 full evidence; but after that, *all flesh was to see the*  
 Isa. lii. 9, *salvation of our God.* He would make bare his holy  
 10. *arm in the eyes of all nations.* These instructions  
 were altogether new; for tho' God rais'd up pro-  
 phets in several ages, yet he did not use to send  
 them abroad: But now, by virtue of that power  
 that our Lord had in heaven and in earth, he will  
 be *sought of them that asked not after him, and found of*  
 them that *sought him not*; and therefore speaks by his  
 ixv. i. Apostles, *Behold me, behold me, to a people that were*  
*not called by his name.* Thus the Lord created a  
*new thing in the earth*, that which their fathers had  
 not heard of, they are to be unconfin'd in their mi-  
 nistry.

(4.) For this he gives 'em qualifications. They  
 are *endued with power from on high*, the holy Ghost  
 came upon them. That power signifies two things;  
*first*, their authority to go abroad; 'till then they were  
 not to do it; he bids 'em *tarry at Jerusalem* till this  
 commission was sent down. *Secondly*, it also imports  
 their *capacity* to go upon this great expedition. For  
 as the Holy Ghost came upon them in the shape of  
*cloven and flaming tongues*, so that is an emblem,  
 both that they should be able to speak all languages,  
 and that the word of the Lord in their mouths  
 would shine, and search, and pierce, like a fire.  
 As he sent them upon work that never any were  
 employ'd about before, so he furnish'd them for  
 it in a new way. The Church of the *Jews* seldom  
 wanted miracles among them, but they had never  
 any

any thing like this; that a company of Galileans should be attended by vast numbers of devout people who were assembled from every nation under heaven, and these all hear in their different tongues the wonderful works of God. It is reckon'd a mighty thing, that when Moses was of a slow speech, God should be with his mouth; but what was that to this unravelling of Babel? At the building of that Tower, God confounded their languages; at the building of a Gospel-church, he over-rul'd that confusion, and gave in a miraculous remedy.

(5.) He did it in accomplishment of his ancient prophecies. The book of God is full to this purpose. Promises are made to those people who seem'd the farthest off from mercy. I have shewn you with what contempt Ishmael was cast out: we read that his sons were Nebaioth, Kedar, and several others; his posterity were some of the greatest enemies to the Church of God. The Ishmaelites and Hagarenes are in the black-roll of sinners. The Psalmist complains that he sojourn'd in the tents of Kedar, and yet there is mercy for them. *All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.*

The greatest oppressions that ever the Jews felt, were in Egypt and Assyria, and yet even these were to have the offers of salvation; *In that day Israel shall be a third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of mine hands, and Israel mine inheritance.*

If there could be any hope for those that liv'd on the great continent, yet methinks the islands were deliver'd to despair and darkness. As the sea seem'd to have wash'd 'em off from the rest of the world,



# 396 *Preach'd unto the GENTILES.*

S. E. R. M. world, so they might say, as in another case, *The*  
 XXVIII. *Lord has utterly separated us from his people. But*  
 xlix. 1. *even these are within the promise, Listen O isles*  
*unto me, and hearken ye people from far. And*  
*when the question is put, Who are these that fly as*  
*a cloud, and as doves to their windows? The answer*  
*is, Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of*  
*Tarshish first, to bring my sons from far to the name*  
*of the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Thus*  
*open is the promise, I will gather all nations and*  
*tongues, and they shall come and see my glory; and I*  
 lxvi. 18, *will set a sign among 'em, and will send those that es-*  
 19. *cape to the Isles afar off, that have not heard of my*  
*fame, neither seen my glory; and they shall declare my*  
*glory among the Gentiles.*



May 24.  
1719.

## SERMON XXVIII.

Psal. ii. 8.



**Y**OU have heard that our blessed Lord, as a reward to his sufferings, had his name spread farther than ever the Father's had been; for he was *preach'd among the Gentiles: he has the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.* And if you do but consider that this was a glory which the Supreme Being did not think fit to take for several generations, I cannot suppose it will be any astonishment to tell you, that

II. He who thus distinguish'd himself by an honour that had not been known for many ages, could  
 be

be no other than the Most High God. *Jehovah* S E R M.  
XXVIII.  
is to be King over all the earth; and in that day there Zech. xiv.  
9.  
shall be one Lord, and his name one. 'Twould be  
strange that a creature should have that for his re-  
ward, which the great God himself has not. That  
the one should be only known in *Israel*, and the o-  
ther (as if those limits were unworthy of him)  
should be glorious to the ends of the earth. That the  
revelation which the Father made of himself reach'd  
no farther than the *Jews* for a vast length of time,  
will not be denied: *He suffer'd all nations to walk in* Act. xiv.  
16.  
*their own ways; the times of that ignorance he wink'd*  
*at:* and therefore, who is it of whom we read xviii. 30.  
such things, that the isles shall wait for him? that his Mal. i. 11.  
name shall be great from the rising of the sun, to the  
going down of the same? that he shall bring forth Matt. xii.  
20, 21.  
judgment unto victory, and on his arm shall the Gen-  
tiles trust? Who is it that spreads out a greater glo-  
ry than ever the God of *Israel* did? Is this a crea-  
ture?

Sometimes he speaks in his deriv'd character:  
*The Lord has call'd me from the womb; from the* Isa. xlix. 1;  
*bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name,* 3, 5, 6.  
*saying, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will*  
*be glorified. The Lord that form'd me from the womb*  
*to be his servant said,—— that I should be glorious*  
*in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength,*  
*he said,—— I will give thee for a light to the Gen-*  
*tiles, that thou may'st be my salvation to the ends of*  
*the earth. The Jewish religion paid a mighty tri-*  
*bute to none but the Supreme God, and shall the*  
*Christian give more to a subordinate Deity? no,*  
*we adore what they did. Is he the God of the Jews* Rom. iii.  
29, 30.  
*only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? It is one God,*  
*who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the un-*  
*circumcision thro' faith.*

I have shewn you that his being seen of Angels  
in the manner you have heard, was too much for  
one

S E R M. one who is only some degrees above 'em; that their  
 XXVIII. worship and adoration was so much allegiance to  
 an uncreated nature. And I hope you will now  
 see, that his being *preach'd to the Gentiles* would be  
 an excess that no true devotion can allow, if he  
 was not the Most High, and *thought it no robbery to  
 be equal with God*. I'm sure it must be a robbery  
 in thus making himself equal with him in honour  
 if he was not equal to him in nature.

In the pursuit of this argument, I shall remind  
 you of those heads that I have already enlarg'd up-  
 on. In opening out the design and fulness of these  
 expressions, I told you, that for Christ to be the  
 subject of our ministry, was that we should de-  
 clare him to be, 1. The only Mediator between  
 God and man. 2. Sufficient to answer all the dan-  
 gers of our souls. 3. We are to do this in the  
 most open way. 4. That he was entirely willing  
 to save those that are lost. 5. We therefore per-  
 suade sinners to come to him, and, 6. Are bound  
 to assert his right of government over the whole  
 creation, and especially over the Church. You have  
 heard enough to convince you it is that. Thus  
 Christ must be preach'd. In this light he is held  
 forth by the Scriptures of truth; and what we tell  
 the world of Him is upon these characters. I  
 will now shew you, that all these can be true of  
 no other than a GOD, and our ministry would be  
 a fraud to mankind, we should be found *false wit-  
 nesses* both to you and to Him that sent us, if we  
 said all this of a creature.

This I desire your attention to, as that which  
 is not only a reveal'd doctrine, but what enters in-  
 to all your hope and duty. Many have a mind  
 to pass it off as a dry speculation, whether Christ  
 is God or no. "They don't love *doubtful dispu-  
 tations*; these are things above 'em; they are  
 "hard to be conceiv'd; 'tis carrying 'em out of  
 "their

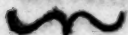


“ their depth. Either it is not laid down in the <sup>S E R M.</sup>  
 “ Scriptures, or if it be, 'tis under so many folds <sup>XXVIII.</sup>  
 “ of mystery, that God does not expect we  
 “ should believe what he knows we cannot under-  
 “ stand. That a man may be sav'd without it,  
 “ 'tis not necessary to our holiness now, or the  
 “ great felicity of another world.” Thus do peo-  
 ple *sham* the truth, who have not the confidence  
 to *deny* it. It lets us see, that Satan has advocates  
 of all sizes: that if he cannot bring you to make  
 shipwreck of faith, he'll bring you to make a jest  
 of it. But *wilt thou know, O vain man*, that with-  
 out faith in Christ, as the only Mediator, a suffici-  
 ent Saviour, a merciful and faithful High-priest,  
 a King over the world, and especially the Church,  
 thou art amongst his enemies? Now, there's no  
 abstracting these from his Divinity; they belong to  
 him as a God. The Scripture makes him the ob-  
 ject of our confidence upon these heads, only be-  
 cause *he is the Lord, and there is none else.*

1. We can preach no Person to the Gentiles, as  
 the only Mediator between God and man, but one  
 that is God as well as man: *The same that was in* Joh. i. 2.  
*the beginning with God: he is the true God, and eter-* 1 Joh. v. 20.  
*nal life.* Do any suppose that because he is call'd  
*the man Christ Jesus*, that therefore he was not *God*  
*manifest in the flesh*? Are we afraid of meeting him  
 in this lower title? no, *He is antichrist, who denies* iv. 2, 3:  
*that Christ is come in the flesh.* But consider here,  
 why must he as Mediator be a man? What neces-  
 sity was there of his coming down into our very  
 nature? The reason is plain, that he might stand  
 upon a level with one of the parties, whose happi-  
 ness he comprehended in the reconciliation. As  
 the Apostle argues, *A Mediator is not a Mediator of* Gal. ii. 20.  
*one.* It's suppos'd that there are two in the quar-  
 rel; therefore in making up the breach, he must  
 be as low as the offender: *Forasmuch as the children* Heb. ii. 14.

were

SER. M. were partakers of flesh and blood, he likewise himself  
 XXVIII. took part of the same.



And is not the obligation as great and strong that he should be a God? If there was any necessity of his partaking of one nature, there must be the very same of his sustaining the other. What's the reason that an Angel could not do as well? He is plac'd between the two natures, neither God nor man: and therefore if a *partnership in both* was not needful, such a creature must have had the most happy situation for this great design. But Angels are both too high and too low: their nature was above the seed of *Abraham*, and therefore he that came to redeem us, was *made lower than they*. Why? that he might be as low as man; but that would never constitute him a Mediator, unless at the same time he was as high as God. He was *in the form of God*, and thought it no robbery to be *equal with God*, when he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him *the form of a servant*. To say that he represented the Divine Nature is nothing; for an Angel, nay a man, might do that. *Moses* did it, and therefore it is said with respect to him,

Gal. ii. 19. that *the law was ordain'd by Angels in the hands of a Mediator*. He might in the same manner have represented both God and man, by keeping his first glory: for if he is ever so much better than the Angels, he is nearer to man than God, supposing him to be no more than a creature. But in taking  
 iv. 4. upon him our interest, he was to be *made of a woman, it behov'd him in all things to be like his brethren*.

Heb. ii. 16. And what? Is the concern of *our nature* manag'd by an equal, and that of the *Divine* only by a deputy? No, the *child born* is the *mightry God*, the *Son given* is the *everlasting Father*. *Job* gives you the true notion of a Mediator, when he complains that all the creation was not able to furnish one.

Speaking

# GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 401

Speaking of God he saith, *He is not a man as I am*, S E R M. XXVIII.  
 and therefore, if there's any agreement, it must be by one who is upon a level with each party: *Neither is there any daysman between us, who may lay his hand upon us both.* Job ix. 32.  
 This daysman, this umpire in the grand debate, is suppos'd not only to come with designs of peace, but as one who is fix'd to the two contenders: he must lay his hand upon us both. Now, as it's easie to imagine what he means by laying his hand upon man, how daring must the presumption be that any creature should in the same sense lay his hand upon God? *Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor, has taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him? To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal,* Isa. xl. 13, 14.  
*saith the holy One?* ver. 25.

There are two sorts of Mediators: *First*, one that has no interest in *either* party; what we call an indifferent person. *Secondly*, one that has an interest in *both*. Our blessed Saviour was not a Mediator of the former sort, but only of the latter. Nay indeed, there could be no Mediator that was unbyass'd to both parties. Angels must have join'd with God against man, devils would have taken part with man against God; and therefore our Mediator must be so plac'd between the two adversaries, as to partake of the concerns of both. In order to make him properly a party with us, he must be truly *man*; flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. And does not the very notion of a Mediator tell us, that he could never manage the interest of the Divine Nature, if he was not as truly *God*?

So that his Deity is not an uncertain or a distant speculation; you see it enters into your hope. If he was no man, and if he is no God, we have had no Mediator, the war keeps open; and if there's no reconciliation, there's no pardon; *Our preaching*



S E R M. *is in vain, and your faith in vain, you are yet in your*  
 XXVIII. *sins.* If he was not God, his pretending to secure the divine glory by a satisfaction was exercising himself in things too high for him. He might have a pity for *man*, but no creature was great enough to take into his hands the interest of *God*, Job v. 18. who has expressly told us, that he *puts no trust in his Saints*. Not that they ever deceiv'd him; but the meaning is, that there is one affair which he will keep within himself, which none of the spirits about the throne can be equal to. And what can this design be, that none of the Saints are let into, as managers or agents, but the redemption of his people?

(2.) In preaching Christ Jesus, we represent him to the world as sufficient to answer all the necessities of their souls, both by way of atonement for 'em, and of conquest over 'em; that he paid a full price, and that he is possessor of a complete fund. We do not call 'em to the vain practice of the heathen religion, to *trust in a God that cannot save*: If there was any more needful to their pardon than he has done, or to their healing than he can do, *in vain would salvation be hop'd for from Him*, any more than from the multitude of mountains. But

PL lxxxix. we tell the Gentiles, that he is *one that is mighty*,  
 19. *able to save to the uttermost*, that *whoever believes in*  
 Heb. vii. *him shall not be confounded*; that *the ends of the earth*  
 24  
 1 Pet. ii. 6. *may look to him and be sav'd*.

Now, upon what foundation can we talk so at large, but because *he is the Lord, and there is none else*? He speaks of himself, *I am Jehovah*; there  
 Isa. xlv. *is no God besides me*; a just God and a Saviour, and  
 21.—25. *there is none besides me. Look unto me, and be ye sav'd all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall*

shall swear. Surely shall one say, In the LORD have I righteousness and strength; even to HIM shall men come, and all that are incens'd against him shall be asham'd: in the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified and glory. SER M.  
XXVIII.

We durst not say of a creature, let him be never so glorious, that by one offering he has for ever perfected them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14. Observe there, what He gives 'em is a perfection. This perfection is for ever; it includes their sanctification, and 'tis by no more than one offering. The Devils are a great sacrifice to Divine Justice; but tho' that execution has continu'd so long, they are not so much as sanctified. The Jews had an High-priest by divine appointment, who sanctified the people, but they were never perfected; what he did to 'em must be repeated every year: But here is one offering that held for the space of three hours; and this avails to the full pardon of all the Saints that ever were, or ever will be either in earth or in heaven.

'Tis plain the merit does not arise from either the extremity or the length of his troubles. Another person's body might have been expos'd to the same torture, and yet it would not avail as a propitiation for one sin. So that the value of this death is taken from his dignity that endur'd it: and in that case we must consider him as having more than a dying nature. If he was no higher than an Angel, he must be too high for a cross. He died as a man, and what must He be more than man, to give that death such an extension of merit, as to make an atonement for those vast numbers out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?

Had he been a creature, tho' never so highly exalted, his death might be look'd on as heroical; but not as atoning, because it was impossible that such a one should lay the Divine Nature under any obligation; For who has first given to him, and Rom. xi.

S E R M  
XXVIII.

*it shall be recompensed to him again?* As for example, an Angel may be very dutiful, but he is incapable of having a claim upon God; and the reason is plain, because he can do no more than he is oblig'd to do. And if you will suppose a creature higher than the Angels, the more glory you imagine to be in Him, the less is he capable of deserving for another; because all his capacities are pre-engag'd.

But now, in order to our Lord's being a sacrifice, that is said of him which could never be true of a creature, that he was *made under the law*. The whole creation are under one law already; nor can they merit any thing from God by laying themselves under a new one. 'Tis too late to have it said of the Angels; for he made them spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire: and therefore, when this is affirm'd of Christ, it must be understood of something *new*, what nothing but his own consent could bring upon him. And it is of the same nature with what he says, *A body hast thou prepared me*, such a cloathing as I had not before: so that this could be only true of one who was eternally *above law*; and that's more than can be said of any creature, let him be never so glorious.

I'm aware of an answer that some will give to this, that he was made under the ceremonial law, that *being a minister of the circumcision, it became him to fulfil all righteousness*. This indeed is true enough; but I think it very plain, the law the Apostle saith he was made under, is not *That*, because he goes on to tell us the reason of it, it was *to redeem those that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons*. Observe here, he speaks this to the *Galatians*, Gentiles who were never under the ceremonial law of the *Jews*, and therefore needed no redemption from it. He came under the same law with them; and that was the law that the whole creation



creation is under, the covenant of works. Now S E R M.  
 this, as a creature, he must have been under *before*, XXVIII.  
 and therefore his taking upon him that obligation  
*then* would have been of no avail.

No wonder therefore that he is call'd *Jehovah* Jer. xxiii.  
*our righteousness*; for tho' the dying by which he 6.  
 brought it in shew'd him to be a man, yet the ve-  
 ry bringing in that righteousness proves that he is  
 the great *Jehovah*. Nor need we be amaz'd, when  
*God awakes his sword against a man*, that he confi- Zech. xiii.  
 ders that man as *his fellow*. This is more than e- 9.  
 ver he call'd an Angel; for *who among the gods may* Pf. lxxxix.  
*be compar'd unto the Lord?* and yet he saith it to a 6.  
 man, and that in a case when he was going to shew  
 his human nature in the most lamentable way. The  
 very awaking of the sword against him was an ar-  
 gument that he had something about him weak  
 and vain and passive. He could not upon this  
 consideration be a *fellow* to God; for with regard  
 to *That* he calls himself *a worm, and no man*. And  
 is it not strange that in the very worst of our nature,  
 he should be represented as equal to God? But, it  
 shews us, that tho' the sword kill'd him as a crea-  
 ture, yet the Father had taken his aim in vain,  
 the blow had pass'd for nothing, if it had not fal-  
 len upon *his fellow*.

Such a phrase is that which I have some time a-  
 go brought in to the service of this argument, *Take*  
*heed to the church of GOD, which he has purchas'd* Acts xx.  
*with his own blood*. To talk of the blood of a God, 28.  
 of a dying bleeding Deity, is a force upon all lan-  
 guage; but the meaning can be only this, that tho'  
 he who died was plainly a man, yet there must be  
 another consideration of him: He bled as a man,  
 but he purchas'd as a God: *Being the brightness of* Heb. i. 3.  
*his Father's glory, and the express image of his Person,*  
*by himself he purg'd our sins. He that lov'd us, and* Rev. i. 5.  
*wash'd us from our sins in his own blood, and has* 6, 8.

# 406 GOD preach'd to the Gentiles.

SER M. made us kings and priests unto God and his Father:  
XXVIII. He is alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending,  
the Almighty.

The same may we observe of his other work as a Saviour, and that is making you a willing people; having grace enough to produce your change, to carry on the reformation, and bring you at last to heaven. This the Scripture does sometimes affirm of the Father. Faith is the operation of God, who rais'd Christ from the dead. He is the author of every good and perfect gift, who is the Father of lights, without any variableness or shadow of turning. Sometimes the Son claims it as his own

Psal. cx. 3. performance: *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, and they shall worship thee in the beauties of holiness.* And sometimes we are said to be born of the Spirit. Our conversion is by the power of the holy Ghost; it is He that quickens.

And tho' the scheme that is so much admir'd has given us a subordination of these three, yet we find the greatest work, that our thoughts are able to conceive of, ascrib'd to 'em all. Now, who is it that can create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you? We know that none of the gods of the heathen can give rain, nor can the heavens themselves, without a Divine appointment, give showers, tho' they are so full of 'em. Now, must he be a God who waters the earth? and may a creature cause his doctrine to drop as the rain, and his speech to distil as the dew?

Have you no other than the Supreme Being for your author? Is it He that has made you, and not you yourselves? Is he the potter, and you the clay? And can the other creation, which is more difficult by the opposition that it meets with, and more glorious by the happiness that it rises to, may this be done by one who is not God? no, there must  
Eph. i. 19. be the exceeding greatness of his power to work faith in

us. Are you to be sanctified in Christ Jesus, and is he no more than a creature as yourselves are? I am oblig'd to the Saints, the excellent of the earth, as the helpers of my joy, and more so to the Angels, as the guardians of my soul; but there is something that I want, which neither the one nor the other can give me, and for this I am directed to a Redeemer. Now, his being stronger, and more glorious than they, is not enough, unless he is omnipotent. I can never think he will be able to change my vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body, if it is not from a power by which he can subdue ALL THINGS to himself.

S E R M.  
XXVIII.

Phil. iii.  
21.

(3.) I told you that in preaching Christ Jesus, we are to make a public discovery of him. We must not conceal his righteousness and his truth from the great congregation; and in that are to run all hazards: but this is more than we owe to a creature. 'Tis as much, I'm sure, as we can possibly do for a God; and it's pity that there are no bounds set to our zeal for him, if he is not so. Worshiping an Angel is reckon'd idolatry, and a gross wickedness, and let no man beguile you into it. Suppose you had seen any of those who counted all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, and ask'd 'em, "Why do you take all this pains for one who is no more than a vicegerent? Have you any reserves for the principal? Can you possibly go farther for the great God, than you do for this glorious Deputy?" They might answer, 'Tis he that shall judge among many people, and strong nations afar off; and therefore as all people will walk every one in the name of his God, so we will walk in the name of this Lord our God for ever and ever.

Col. ii. 18.  
Phil. iii. 8.

Mic. iv. 3.  
5.

This had been a strange way of preaching both to Jews and Gentiles. As to the Jews, if they had not taken the Messiah to be a God, what had they



S E R M. got by the dispensation? What was there in God's  
 XXVIII. speaking to 'em *by his Son*, more than those divers

Acts xv.  
 21.

1 Cor. x.  
 1, 2.

Isa. xl. 9.

Hag. ii. 9.

manners that at sundry times he had taken with their fathers *by the prophets*? 'Tis true, we read that *Moses had them that preach'd him in the synagogues every sabbath day*; but preaching *Moses* was quite a different thing to them from preaching *Jesus*. There was no pretence of engaging their trust and dependence upon *Moses*: he was never call'd their Saviour or their Advocate. And so, those expressions of their being *baptiz'd unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*, never did, and never can mean, that they were call'd by his name, or own'd a divine authority in him. But thus did *John the Baptist* proclaim himself to 'em: *He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness*. When he call'd himself so, it was to the *Jews*, who would easily turn to that Scripture where this was foretold. There they might read in the plainest language: *O Sion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain, O Jerusalem that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid*. This does by an undeniable connexion of the passages refer to the coming of Christ *Jesus*: And what are they to say in this public manner? *Say to the cities of Judah, Behold your God*. Supposing they were to make all this solemnity for a creature, what could they possibly do more for the Most High? *Solomon* knew that *God himself fill'd the house with his glory*. It was no Angel that manag'd the cloud, tho' such a one might have done it. They ador'd the discovery that God made of himself. And what? was a God in a cloud the Supreme God, and a God manifest in the flesh only a subordinate? No, He that gave peace in that place, and made the glory of the latter house greater than the former, is the Lord of hosts.

Are ministers order'd to *lift up their voice with strength*, to stand it out against all opposition, and not to be afraid in proclaiming a mere name, a bare title? The prophet, in his discourses, takes off all fumes of that nature, when he describes the God we are to speak of: *Behold, the Lord God shall come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and shall carry 'em in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.* You will easily allow the fitness of this character to our blessed Lord. Now, he that does these things, has *measur'd the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heaven with a span*, and is call'd afterwards *the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth, who faints not, nor is weary, and there's no searching out of his understanding.*

S E R M.

XXVIII.

Isa. xl. 10.

11.

ver. 12.

v. 28.

As impertinent would it have been to go among the *Gentiles* with a report concerning a creature; it would have done no more than refine and elevate their idolatry. Their fault was not worshipping the true God, and doing service to those that *by nature are no gods*. Bowing before the work of their hands was the aggravation and the folly of the crime; but the first error lay in paying this homage to any thing; and had they chosen the best of the creation for their idol, it was all one in the substance of the Action: the guilt had been the same to worship an Angel as to worship a fly; because it was an alienation of that which could be only due to their Maker.

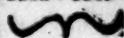
And must Christianity, which is reveal'd to bring them to their God, rather keep 'em from him? They were bid to *believe in Christ Jesus, to call on him*, to do it in hopes of salvation, to lay the whole weight of their faith and confidence there: and is not this as much as they could do

to

SER M. to the true God? Do you imagine, if the Apostles  
 XXVIII. knew Jesus Christ to be no more than a creature,  
 that they would in so loose a way have recommended him as the object of all devotion and assurance? and this among people who had *gods many, and lords* or mediators *many* before? Would they not have distinguish'd a thousand times between the duty they press'd to a Mediator, and that which was due to the Supreme Being; because this was the very rock upon which the heathen had been split before? Why would they in so unguarded a manner speak of him as a God, without telling the people that they only us'd the word in a lower sense? What pity is it they should let the *Gentiles* run away with an error so much akin to that which they were brought up in?

Had some preachers of the new scheme in our polite age gone upon the ministry, there had been no danger; they would most certainly have taken care every time they call'd Christ by the name of God to explain it to 'em, that he was *not self-originated*, if such a rumbling word may be called an explication? There had been no snare in their prayers or sermons, no ascribing of glory to *him*, but rather *thro' him* to another. We should have had a Gospel well guarded with critical distinctions: But it's plain the Apostles went on in a more uncautious way, and made so little difference between the essential glories of the Father and Son, as has tempted those who felt the power of their Gospel to think there was none. Nay, really, as far as I have look'd into the Mahometan Religion, I must needs own, that 'tis a scheme more open and less deceitful than the Christian, if Christ is not God. That person never call'd himself more than the great Prophet. He takes no titles in common with the Supreme Being; and therefore his followers are in no temptation to believe him



him a God, because he never call'd himself so; S E R M. XXVIII.  
 but with us there are many passages that must be a snare to our souls, if they do not reveal Christ to be the great object of our faith. 

(4.) In preaching Christ Jesus, we declare his willingness to save them that are lost. 'Tis true, this may be in a creature. Angels have a pity to our nature as it is forlorn, and a delight in it when it is renew'd. The Saints put on, as the elect of God, *bowels of mercy*; but yet the concern that a Mediator has for the souls of men, is laid down in those characters that belong chiefly to God.

When *Job* speaks of the divine compassion, he represents it as flowing from a Creator, *Thou shalt call, and I will answer, for thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.* He looks upon these unhappy people as things or persons whom he has formed; and in that view the Scripture all along delivers it to us. With the same propriety does our Lord speak of his elect. When he was in the world, it is said, *The world was made by him.* He came to redeem a part of his own creation. For though we have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of our sins, yet all things are created by him, and for him. Col. i. 14. 16.

Thus he saith of his people, when he compares himself to a shepherd, *They are my sheep,* and describes a hireling, as one *whose own the sheep are not.* 'Tis true, he mentions the Father as making the choice, *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me;* but even in that prayer, when he appear'd in the form of a servant, he speaks of an united and common possession, which would have been too much for a creature. *All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorify'd in them.* Joh. x. 27. xvii. 10.

(5.) Our preaching is persuading sinners to come to him, that they may have life. *For in him was life, and that life is the light of the world.* But what a baulk is it to our argument, to tell 'em he is not God?

S E R M. God? One of the noblest notions we can have of  
XXVIII. the Deity is, that *with him is the fountain of life* :

*In him we live, and move, and have our being*, was  
Pl. xxxvi. the plainest account that the Apostle could give of  
10. the most High God to the *Athenians* : and would  
Acts xvii. he say that of him that might be as well affirm'd  
28. of a creature? Is it not too much for a depen-

Joh. xi. 25. dent being to say, *I am the resurrection and the life, and whosoever believes in me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live*? The meaning was not, that he who should die should rise again and live, but the names he here takes upon him signify an almighty influence.

We should be asham'd to call people to depend  
Psal. xxii. upon one that is not God, *All the ends of the earth*  
27, 28. *shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee, for the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations. We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and our selves your servants for Jesus sake, for the sake of his honour and empire. Whether should a people seek but to their God, and is our ministry inviting you to any less? No, as Thomas call'd him, My Lord, and my God, so all the*  
Joh. xx. Scripture is written, *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life thro' his name.*  
28, 31.

(6.) We proclaim him as the great Head over all things unto his Church. We own no other authority; but this is so far from being inconsistent with the belief of his divinity, that we durst not say so much of him if he was not God, and had  
Eph. i. ult. *not the fulness of him, who fills all in all*. Sometimes he has represented his relation to the Church by that of a marriage; and especially the *Gentile church* is call'd to remember, that *he is her Lord, and she should worship him*: but how assuming would this be for any creature after the plain language of that  
Psal. xlv. *antient*  
11.

antient promise, *Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the holy one of Israel, the Lord of the whole earth shall he be call'd?* SERMON XXVIII. Isa. liv. 5.  
 Is it likely that one who is no more than a vicergerent deity would be rival to him who gave this assurance? Or is the Church under the new Testament plac'd in relation to a lower head than that under the old? No, his empire shall endure for ever. He is spoke of with all governing perfecti-  
*ons, One that searches the hearts, to render to every man according to his works; one that is with his people always to the end of the world; one who lives in them, and they in him; of whose fulness they receive, and grace for grace; and therefore we must say to Sion, THY GOD reigns.* Rev. ii. 23. Matth. xxviii. 20. Joh. xiv. 20. i. 14.



# SERMON XXIX. June 7. 1719.

III.  **W**E are to consider this branch of our religion as a MYSTERY; one of those things that man's wisdom teaches not, and which we can no otherwise know than by *comparing spiritual things with spiritual.* That God should be manifest in the flesh, is a doctrine that appears to our wonder; that he should be justified in the Spirit, carries us still farther beyond our depth; his being seen of Angels, and ador'd by a nature into which he never enter'd, swells up the admiration of the believer; and now it's another article of surprize, that he should be *preach'd among the Gentiles*, if you do but consider the following particulars.



S E R M. I. 'Tis mysterious, that the *Gentiles* who were  
 XXIX. neglected for so many ages should have Christ Je-  
 sus preach'd among them. What answer can be  
 given to these two questions? Why God was so  
 long silent to those people, and why he spoke out  
 Isa. xxxv. at last? That *the wilderness and the solitary place*

1, 2. *should be glad, and the desert rejoice, and blossom as  
 the rose: That the glory of Lebanon should be given  
 to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, that they  
 should see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of  
 the God of Israel!* We can resolve it into nothing  
 else but his own good pleasure, *the counsel of his  
 will; even so it seem'd good in his sight.*

You know what diminutive names the methods  
 of providence drew upon those poor people. The  
*Jews* call'd 'em no better than *dogs*, and our Saviour  
 himself makes use of that language. The doc-  
 trines of religion were esteem'd *the childrens bread*,  
 and by no means to be cast unto those for whom  
 they were never design'd. Thus it held for many  
 generations, and yet at last, the Gospel that seem'd  
 to have crowded up it self took pleasure in a dif-  
 fusion. The great God gave such a turn to the  
 course of his providence as he never had done be-  
 fore, and unravell'd all the dispositions of former  
 ages. They who were *in times past Gentiles in the flesh*,

Eph. ii. 11, 12, 13. *called the uncircumcision by those who were the circum-  
 cision in the flesh made with hands; at that time they  
 were without Christ, being aliens from the common-  
 wealth of Israel, strangers from the covenants of pro-  
 mise, having no hope, and without God in the world:  
 But now in Christ Jesus, they who were sometimes a-  
 far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*  
 Well might he say, that he would create a new  
 thing in the earth, what had not been conceived  
 or expected.

Where

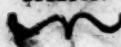
Where shall we look for the springs of this mo-<sup>S E R M.</sup>tion but into that sovereign goodness, *that is gra-* XXIX.  
*cious because it will be gracious, and shows mercy where*  
*it will shew mercy?* Who can account for the distinction that he made between one of Noah's posterity from the other two? Why must the revelation of a pure Gospel and a future hope be confin'd to them? Why did it after that still run narrower in the channel of one family? He acted in this as the proprietor of his own mercy, *who gives no account of his matters*, either in grace or nature.

And the question is as hard, why he should afterwards break down the enclosures of his own making, and send abroad without any limitations that truth that had been so long a peculiar? *By Eph. iii. 3; revelation he made known the mystery, which in other* 5. 6.  
*ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ, by the Gospel. If there was any reason for keeping it as a secret from some part of mankind, why did not that reason hold? Why must the argument of revealing himself to a peculiar people be only temporary, and he who delighted in the name of the God of Israel, take pleasure in being call'd the God of the whole earth?*

Was there any likelihood, that they who had been struck off should ever be taken in again? Or, that Japhet, who sunk into the same idolatry with Ham, should be persuaded to dwell in the tents of Shem? This stands as a wonder in our Bible, and it can appear no otherwise, considering that *when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the* Deut. xxxii. 8.  
*bounds of the people according to the number of the* 9.  
*children of Israel; i. e. in ranging the whole world he had his eye to one nation, and gave the rest*  
2 their

S. E. R. M. their shares, so as to serve the interest of these.

XXIX.



*For the Lord's portion was his people, Jacob was the lot of his inheritance, that which fell to him in the dividend that his providence made: And yet after this, the love that us'd to keep within bounds shone out at large, and became the glory of the universe. I must own, that such a widening of religion was foretold, and therefore could not be a doctrine unknown to the fathers; but if we had taken our notions from appearances, we should have thought that God's choice of the Jews, and his neglect of the Gentiles, had been for eternity. Because,*

2. These *Gentiles* were no way prepar'd to receive the news of a Saviour when he came to be preach'd among them. *All nations walk'd in their own ways, and at Athens in particular, they thought the Apostle a babbler, a setter forth of strange gods.* What a train of ceremonies, devotions, deliverances and revelations had the *Jews* on purpose to establish their faith, and lead on their hope towards a great Redeemer? Scarce a prophet arose, but besides his message to them, that related to the particular duty and mercy of that day, he was still looking and talking farther, foretelling things to come; as the Apostle says to the *Jews*, that *Moses* was not only a servant to his own day, but a witness to ours. He was rais'd up and furnish'd with a greater Spirit than what might bring them out of *Egypt*. There was a prospect in all that he said and did, a reference to future generations; for he told them, that *God would raise up unto them a Prophet like to him.* Nay, saith *Peter*, *All the prophets from Samuel, and those that followed after, have likewise foretold of these days.*

Acts iii.

24.

Tho' we are apt to run thro' those books as so many histories that reach'd no farther than to their own ages, yet you see he look'd upon them all as connected



connected with those last days in which God has S E R M.  
spoken to us by his Son. When Abraham was XXXI.  
call'd out of Ur of the Caldees, God did not only  
promise him a great posterity, and a fine country,  
but the glory of the covenant lay in this, that in  
his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.  
To this end, when they were form'd and modell'd  
into a people, they had laws, judgments, statutes  
and ordinances. These were figures for the time pre-  
sent, a shadow of good things to come. Thus did God  
think fit to train them up, that all their worship  
should be directed to him, who is call'd the great  
hope of Israel. That Christ should come to them  
in person, and be preach'd among them after his  
resurrection, is no great wonder, as the Apostle  
tells them, *Ye are the children of the prophets, and of  
the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying  
to Abraham, And in thee shall all the kindreds of the  
earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up* ver. 25, 26  
*his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away  
every one of you from his iniquity. And to this they  
gave witness in another place, It was needful that* xiii. 45.  
*the Gospel should first be preach'd unto you. This agrees  
to the order that Christ left with them to begin  
at Jerusalem. They were a people that sought him,  
and enquir'd diligently after him. Theirs were* Rom. ix.  
*the fathers, and of them as concerning the flesh Christ* 4. 5.  
*came.*

But to the Gentiles he is reveal'd all at once;  
not like the sun in a clear morning that advances  
and opens his glory by degrees, but rather like a  
sudden rush of light in a cloudy and dark day.  
*When he sprinkles many nations, that which had not* Isa. lii. 15  
*been told them shall they see, and that which they had  
not heard shall they consider. This was a matter that  
could not enter into the imagination of men, and  
therefore when the Apostle brings in a proof of it  
out of the old Testament, he delivers it with this*

E s

remark,

SER M. remark, that *Esaías* is very bold, he dares to say it,  
 XXIX. *I was found of them that sought me not, I was made  
 manifest to them that asked not after me:* So he saith  
 Rom. x. in *Osee*, *I will call them my people who were not my  
 20. people, and her beloved, that was not beloved.*  
 ix. 25.

They are to hear of him without any preparation of types and sacrifices. They had no *pastoral Lamb* to tell them of the great atonement, no *High-priest* to represent the person of a Mediator, no *sprinkling of blood* to signify the virtue of his death, no *temple* to be an earnest of his incarnation: He came to them without any preliminary. This was the manner of entering that the Gospel had among 'em, *That they turned at once from idols to serve the living and true God.*

Tho' God was very near two thousand years in training one nation for a Redeemer, yet without any dawn he darts the light of the glorious Gospel among others. Upon which the Apostle puts the question, *What shall we say then?* q. d. we are quite lost in the mystery, and know not either how to get into it, or how to get out of it. 'Tis an entertainment, but yet 'tis a surprize, *That the Gentiles who followed not after righteousness, never pretended to it, that these have attained unto righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.* Well may we say, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out! Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, and who has been his counsellor?* "Who gave certain rules to that Spirit for so many ages, how to guide and proportion the light that he distributed? Or who at last set him at liberty, to do in redemption as he did in creation, to move upon the face of the waters, and bring light out of darkness all over the world?"

# GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 419

What consistency can we find between the methods of providence in former ages, and those he has taken now? They thought that the Godhead was like to silver, gold, or stone, graven by art and man's device: *And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now he commands all men every where to repent: Because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he has ordain'd; whereof he has given assurance to all men in raising him from the dead.*

3. It is still more mysterious, that the Jews should reject a Saviour who was to be preach'd among the Gentiles. This I mention only as an introduction to the following head. That he who was to be the desire of all nations, should be the contempt of his own; for he came to his own, and his own received him not. And when Moses is read, who testified of him, *To this day the veil is upon their hearts, for they cannot see to the end of those things that were to be abolished.* All the preparations of sacrifice, worship, types and promises were lost upon them. They search'd the Scriptures, in hopes of finding eternal life; and yet tho' these were they that testified of him, *They would not come unto him that they might have life.* The chief-priests who had the best education and opportunity to know his character, the princes of this world, were strangers to the wisdom we preach, for *had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* These rag'd with an envy as high as their station; and the admirers of the temple-service, whose devotion should have led them towards him, pursu'd his doctrine and his life with all the violence they could use. *Israel which followed after the law of righteousness has not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, for they stumbled at that stumbling-stone.* Now is it not much, that he who was to

S E R M.  
XXIX.

Acts xvii.  
23, 30,  
31.

Hag. ii. 6.  
Joh. i. 11.

2 Cor. iii.  
15.

Joh. v. 39.  
40.

1 Cor. ii. 8.

Rom. ix.  
31, 32.



S E R M. be the Saviour of the world, and bring a blessing  
 XXIX. to all the families of the earth, should be thus unknown in a country where he had been expected? That he should find no faith where there had been so much vision? And yet,

4. After his disgrace from the Jews, he is made the subject of our ministry. He said, *I have laboured in vain, and have spent my strength for nought, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God. And now, saith the Lord, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength. And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation to the ends of the earth. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his holy One, to him whom man despises, to him whom the nation abhors, to a servant of rulers, kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the Lord that is faithful, and the holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. Thus saith the Lord, in an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, and to cause to inherit the desolate heritages.*

If we had consider'd the revelation of a Saviour, as an attempt made upon the world, how far it would take, we should think it in vain to go any further after this miscarriage among a chosen people. 'Twas time to give up the design, as that which was never like to succeed, or bring forth fruit to account. But this was no hindrance, for *thro' the fall of the Jews salvation is come to the Gentiles, the diminishing of them was the riches of the world,*

Rom. xi.  
 11, 12.

## GOD preach'd to the Gentiles.

421

*world.* If they did not receive him, who had been waiting for him, and had convers'd with him in types and shadows, how could it be expected that the uncultivated part of mankind should harbour a Gospel of which they had no warning?

S E R M.  
XXIX.

And yet so it was; for the usage he met with from the *Jews*, and which deliver'd his name to so much contempt among 'em, became a part of the doctrine which was preach'd among the *Gentiles*, I mean his obedience to death, even the death of the cross. 'Twas an objection against him then, *He sav'd others, himself he cannot save.* If he be the Christ of God, let him come down from the cross, and we will believe. As he did not come down, it was a protection to their infidelity. They then thought themselves justified to all the world, in calling him a deceiver; so that though he had done many miracles, and taught the will of God perfectly, yet this last reproach, his dying in a cursed way, ras'd out all his former character, and made every thing he had said or done pass for nothing.

Mat. xxvii.  
42.

And yet with this disadvantageous article did the Apostles go out into the world. They made no secret of that death which the enemy derided: *They preach'd Christ Jesus and him crucified.* And is it not strange, that a doctrine which startled the *Jews*, in the very sound, should be received by the *Gentiles*? To a *few* such a principle must be prov'd. When they open'd and alleg'd that *Christ must needs have suffer'd*, it could be only out of *their* writings, but to the *Gentiles* this was a thing totally unknown; they had no prophecies, no types or sacrifice of divine appointment to be the figures of a propitiation to come, and yet with these unconceivable doctrines were preachers to go abroad. They were not ashamed of the cross of Christ, but glory in it. Through

1 Cor. ii. 21

Aet. xvii. 3;

S E R M. that truth they declar'd a God who *pardon'd iniquity, transgression and sin*, and brought to the world the glad tidings of salvation and eternity.

And is it not much, that this article should make its way among the *Gentiles*, which had been derided by the people, who alone were prepared to receive it? That *the stone rejected of the builders should be afterwards made the head of the corner*: This is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. The *Jews* and the Priests among 'em were the builders by profession, and by distinction: They rejected a Stone of the greatest value, and yet this is made the head of the corner! The ground of that whole building, which *fully fram'd together, grows unto a holy temple in the Lord*: The vast fabrick that takes in the people of God all over the earth, and this is the doing of the Lord; so is every thing in providence, but it is *his work* in a more eminent sense, it expresses his wisdom, his sovereignty and universal goodness, it's full of his glory, it bears his image, and it's wondrous in our eyes; in the very eyes of a believer it does not cease to be a mystery. They see something in it that shews the contrivance is to be rather admir'd than explain'd. We stand amaz'd at it, as that which carries up our thoughts so far, that we can neither get forwards nor backwards, can neither leave the subject with indifference, nor comprehend it with knowledge.

5. That Christ should be preach'd to the *Gentiles*, is what he himself put a bar in the way of. He acted all along as a *Jew*, as a *minister of the circumcision*. He submitted to their ordinances, worshiped at their temple, convers'd only with them, never begun the practice of that religion that was to obtain after his death. He continued an example of the ceremonial worship as long as he liv'd. He acquainted the poor woman of *Canaan* with the general



## GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 423

neral rule of his practice, that he was not sent but S E R M.  
to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He charg'd XXIX.  
the seventy disciples not to go into the way of the  
Gentiles, or enter into any city or village of the Sama-  
ritans.

Who would think by such a method of living, that he had any design of extending his Gospel beyond his ministry? Or that the one should go where the other never came? What pains did he take with the generation of his wrath? How did he pursue 'em with doctrines, strike 'em with miracles, do those works among 'em that never man did, and yet they hated both him and his father? What a concern did he Joh. xv.  
shew for them at last, when he pass'd the great sentence 24.  
upon 'em; for when he beheld the city, he wept over Luke xix.  
it, and said, O that thou hadst known, even thou, at 42.  
least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes! It is apparent, as he speaks by the prophet, that his bowels were turn'd within him, and his repentings kindled together. He knew not how to give 'em up, to make them as Admah, and set them as Zeboim. None of this pity discovers it self to those that were then without Christ and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel. He never makes them one visit, or sends them one message; and yet that ungrateful nation, who had been so long his favourites, were to be cast off, and left to a spirit of slumber: and on the other hand, the Gentiles who seem'd to have so little room in his thoughts, were to have the distinction of his love.

He orders the Apostles to be his witnesses to the Acts i. 7.  
uttermost ends of the earth; and it is not unlikely that he might acquaint them with the success of their Gospel as he did Paul, Make haste, and get xxii. 18.  
thee quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me. Thus he saith to those at Rome, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the pro-

S E R M. phet to our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say,  
 XXIX. hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand, and seeing ye  
 shall see and shall not perceive; i.e. they were to have the  
 xxviii. 25. means of grace to no purpose: But be it known un-  
 26, 27, 28. to you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gen-  
 tiles, and they will hear it.

'Tis strange he should act as if he never knew that before. Why did he not make a trial in his own life-time, What good was to be done in those parts of the earth that had all along lain waste? Why did he not break up the fallow-ground himself, but leave it all to be done by his disciples? He was the great subject of the ministry into which he put his servants, but in many cases he was not their example. They preach where he did not; they go where he would never come; and it's rather after his death than during his life, that he is to lighten the Gentiles, and be a salvation to the ends of the earth.

6. This was a thing never to be conceiv'd of by the *Jews*. As their minds were blinded to a Saviour, so they were towards a Gospel, and one great end of sending it into the world. The passages are plain enough, that he was to be the desire of all nations and the governor among them; that all the gathering of the people would be to him, and all the families of the earth blessed in him; that the barren who did not bear was to sing aloud, for more were the children of the desolate than of the married wife. Such promises as these lie thick in the old Testament, and yet when there's any mention of a design that way, the *Jews* receiv'd it as a piece of blasphemy or enthusiasm. Thus when Christ tells them, *Whither I go ye cannot come*. What's their way of expounding it? *Whither will he go that we cannot find him? will he go and teach the Gentiles, or to the dispersed among the Gentiles?* You see by the latter part of that sentence, that they could hardly conceive

Hag. ii. 6.

Psal. xxii.

28.

Gen. xlix.

19.

Iſa. liv. 1.

2.

conceive him guilty of so monstrous a thing as that he should go to teach the Gentiles, but only the dispers'd among 'em, the *Jews* who were scatter'd abroad. S E R M.  
XXIX.

What an offence was it that he should receive publicans, and eat with them? When *Zaccheus* invited him to his house, they were startled: *This man is gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner.* Luke xix. 7. They did not mean one that is partaker of a polluted nature, for all are sinners in that sense; but a foreigner, a Gentile, one that was defil'd by his profession, who lay out of the pale of the church, and was a sinner by birth: They thought it quite wrong in a prophet, and much more in a Saviour, to go into the house of such a one. And the explication he gives was not very satisfactory to 'em, that *this man is also a son of Abraham.* That title was founded on the real sense and meaning of the promise; but it would be very strange to those that heard it.

And you need be in no surprize, that after his death the Apostles drew all the enmity of the *Jews* upon them, whenever they talk'd of the extent of their own commission. Thus was *Paul* receiv'd in the defence that he made; he runs over a noble argument full of learning and evidence; he gives 'em the story of his own conversion, a fact that could neither be denied nor born down: But when he mentions the divine order, *Depart, for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles,* it is said, *they gave him audience to this word, and then lift up their voices, crying, Away with such a fellow from the earth, it is not fit that he should live.* Acts xxii. 21, 22. The very naming of that design is what they could not endure; so far had pride possess'd itself of every faculty, that they were incapable of thinking about such a matter, as if it was in their power to have contradicted



S E R M. ed that argument: *Is he the God of the Jews, and not of the Gentiles? yes, of the Gentiles also.*

XXIX.

They imagin'd that a conversation with these poor people was defiling, as *Peter* owns in his speech to *Cornelius*: *Ye know that it is unlawful for a Jew to keep company, or come to one of another nation.* They make a heavy charge against *Paul*, and would deliver him over to the tumult of the people:

x. 28.

xxi. 28. *Help, O men of Israel, for this is the man who teaches all men, every where against the law, and further, has also brought Greeks into the temple, to pollute this holy place. Tho' this is what they had but an imperfect evidence of, for they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they suppos'd Paul had brought into the temple. The cry moves the city, the people run together, and are going about to kill him. Such a mystery was this to those to whom God had committed the lively oracles, that they were not able to make it pass upon their minds, that there could be any mercy for the rest of the world.*

7. Tis what the Apostles themselves came into very unwillingly: their thoughts were of a national cast as well as others; and this stuck by 'em a long time. For after his resurrection, when he tells 'em they must wait for the promise of the Father which they had heard of him, they immediately catch

Acts i. 6. at that as a political mercy: *Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* he answers 'em, *It's not for you to know the times and seasons, which the Father has put in his own power; but then tells 'em, that this promise was for other ends, that they might be his witnesses in Jerusalem, and Judea, and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.*

You find, after this, with what reluctance they went away farther than their own country. The persecution that arose about *Stephen* was a means to scatter

# GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 427

scatter 'em to Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, S E R M.  
XXIX.  
*preaching the word to none but the Jews only.* Philip xi. 19.  
 about the same time is driven to Samaria, where  
 he had mighty success, for many believ'd in the name  
 of the Lord, and there was great joy in that city. Peter  
 has a vision which brings him an account of his  
 duty, and answers the arguments that he had rais'd  
 against it. For when he saith, upon the descend-  
 ing of that sheet that had four-footed beasts and  
 creeping things, *Lord, I have never eaten any thing*  
*common or unclean: the voice saith to him, What God*  
*has cleans'd, call not thou common.* This he knew  
 not the meaning of till he went to Cornelius, and  
 there he delivers the sense of the vision: *I perceive* x. 34. 35.  
*God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he*  
*that fears him, and works righteousness, is accepted of*  
*him.* And says farther, *God has shewn me that I*  
*ought to call no man common.*

One would think there was very little need  
 of these extraordinary methods to impress upon 'em  
 so plain a duty as that of preaching to the Gentiles;  
 and yet the prejudice of education lay so deep,  
 that it must be rooted out by an uncommon argu-  
 ment. Nay, the good people who attended him  
 are amaz'd, *when they saw the holy Ghost descend upon* ver. 45.  
*the Gentiles.* What? could they imagine that the  
 holy Ghost was not a free agent? Had not Christ  
 told 'em, he blows where he listeth? Besides, Peter  
 is forc'd to argue upon this conviction: *Can any*  
*man forbid water why these should not be baptiz'd,*  
*who have receiv'd the holy Ghost as well as we?* Nay,  
 after this, the very Apostles and brethren object it  
 against him: *Thou wentest to men uncircumcis'd, and* xi. 3.  
*didst eat with them.* Upon which he is oblig'd to  
 rehearse the matter from the beginning, and he reckons  
 it no less than a withstanding of God, if he should  
 have acted otherwise.

S E R M. Saul had his commission at his conversion. Christ  
 XXIX. saith to him, *I will deliver thee from the people, and*  
 the Gentiles, to whom now I send thee, to turn them  
 from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to  
 the living God, that they may receive a remission of  
 their sins. And he comes readily into it, as he tells  
 the king: *Whereupon, O Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, but shew'd first to them of*  
*Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the*  
*Coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they*  
*should repent and turn to God, and bring forth fruits*  
*meet for repentance.* We find indeed all along, that  
 he made his first addresses to the Jews. When he  
 came to Antioch, in Pisidia, he got into one of their  
 synagogues, and introduces his discourse in this  
 xiii. 16. manner: *Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give*  
*audience: and upon their refusal, he tells 'em, It*  
 ver. 46. *was needful that the word of God should first be spoken*  
*to you; but seeing that ye have put it far from you,*  
*and judg'd yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo,*  
*we turn to the Gentiles: for so the Lord has command-*  
*ed us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gen-*  
*tiles, that thou shouldst be for salvation to the ends of*  
*the earth.* And as Christ had told him, that hav-  
 ing born witness for him at Jerusalem, he should al-  
 so bear testimony for him at Rome, when he  
 comes thither, he first sends for the Jews, and tells  
 xviii. 20. 'em, that tho' he had committed nothing against the  
 people and customs of their fathers, yet he was deliver'd  
 prisoner to the Romans; for which cause, saith he, *I*  
*have sent for you, to see and to speak with you, be-*  
*cause for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.*  
 And when he found his labours among them in  
 vain, then he talks of turning to the Gentiles: So  
 that after that, he dwelt two whole years in his own  
 hired house, and received ALL that came to him;  
 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things  
 that concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence.



8. It is some part of the wonder, that the preach-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
ing among the Gentiles should be put into such <sup>XXIX.</sup>  
hands: *Are not these men that speak Galileans? and* <sup>Acts ii. 8,</sup>  
*how is it that we hear among them in our own tongues*  
*the wonderful works of God?* Had he rais'd up at first,  
as he did afterwards, persons out of every kindred,  
and tongue, and people, and nation, who were ac-  
quainted with the language and methods of their  
own country, it had not been so much.

But he makes choice of a company of *Jews* who  
were every where hated: *These men, being Jews, do* <sup>xvi. 20,</sup>  
*exceedingly trouble our city, and teach customs which* <sup>21.</sup>  
*are not lawful for us to receive, neither to believe, be-*  
*ing Romans.* These he furnishes with all qualificati-  
ons: they have the gift of tongues, by which they  
are endu'd with power from on high. This was  
a mighty wonder indeed, and therefore the Apo-  
stle puts it upon the rewards of Christ for his suf-  
ferings; *being exalted by the right hand of God, and*  
*having receiv'd of the Father the promise of the holy*  
*Ghost, he has shed forth that which ye now see and*  
*hear.*

Nor is it less remarkable that men of a private  
life should be call'd to stand it out against the face  
of the world: That persons of a low education,  
who were no way prepar'd for hurry and bustle,  
should come joyfully into a fatigue that carried in  
it all manner of dangers. What can we ascribe  
this to, but *the power of Christ resting upon them?* <sup>Heb. ii. 4.</sup>  
*God bare 'em witness by divers signs, and wonders, and*  
*miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his*  
*own will.* They were never either to be hir'd or  
daunted from their duty, but went thro' honour  
and dishonour, good report and bad report, as deceivers <sup>2 Cor. vi.</sup>  
and yet true, as unknown, and yet well known. <sup>8, 9,</sup>  
They were despis'd and misrepresented; and because their  
doctrine was unwelcome, therefore their persons  
were hated. And indeed this is the constant lot  
of

S E R M. of those that will be faithful. The Apostle tells  
 XXX. *Timothy, there are some who resist the truth, men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But,*  
 2 Tim. iii. *faith he by way of encouragement, Thou hast fully*  
 8, 10. *known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endur'd; but out of 'em all the Lord deliver'd me.*



June 21,  
1719.

# S E R M O N XXX.



H I S last particular may be distributed into several others that are contain'd in it: as, That he fetch'd men out of a private life into a service for which their education had no way prepar'd 'em: That he had made 'em run into dangers which they might have shunn'd; and that with the greatest alacrity and obedience: That he furnish'd 'em with the gift of tongues, which had never been known in the world before; and that he call'd most of 'em to seal the truth with their blood, that they might give the greatest testimony of nature to the doctrines of grace.

1. The persons he employ'd were no way prepar'd by education for that life of public service into which he call'd 'em: *He chose the foolish things of this world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty: And base things of the world, and things despised, nay, things that are not, to bring to nought things that are,*  
 1 Cor. i. 27, 28, 29. *that*

# GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 431

that no flesh should glory in his presence. He that S E R M.  
XXX. had the earth, and the fulness thereof, could easily have supply'd himself with the best of its learning; but it stands among the wonders and delights of a Saviour, that he run cross to the expectations and measures of human reason.

That might be call'd a polite age with as much truth as any other. The zeal of the *Jews* for the ritual part of devotion went higher than ever it had done: *They rested in the law, and approv'd the things that were more excellent: they made their boast of God, and were confident that they themselves were guides of the blind, and instructors of the foolish, having a form of knowledge and of truth in the law.* And yet both in giving holiness, and granting commissions, he slides over men of shining parts, and vast attainments, and chooses his servants where no one else would have done. 'Tis this, I say, that gave our dear Redeemer a pleasure at his very soul: *In that hour Jesus rejoic'd in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast reveal'd 'em unto babes: Even so Father, because it seem'd good in thy sight.* He also affirms his own share in the great disposal: *All things are deliver'd to me by my Father, and no man knows who the Son is but the Father, and none knows who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* So that what is call'd the Father's making known these things to babes in one verse, is call'd the Son's revealing 'em in another: And as he had ascrib'd it to the mere sovereign pleasure of God, so here it is represented as his own choice. 'Tis the Son's own will that inclines him to make the revelation. It stands in this account as a free and spontaneous act. And he that made known these things is consider'd three ways, which are all wonderful.

*First,*



S E R M First, That this was not owing to any scarcity  
 XXX. in the creation, for he that does it is *Lord of heaven and earth*. He could have committed the Gospel, as he did the law, *to the disposition of Angels*, being the sovereign of that upper world where they are; or he could have furnish'd himself from the schools of the Gentiles, and the temple of the *Jews*, with men who were either *mighty in the Scriptures*, or masters in the faculty of turning an argument. But,

Secondly, Instead of employing them as necessary to his cause, he threw a vail over their glory: *He hid these things from the wise and prudent*: they above all others fell at this *stumbling-stone*: As it was foretold that the foundation laid in *Sion* would be *a rock of offence, a gin and a snare to both the houses of Israel, and the inhabitants in Jerusalem*. None of the princes of this world knew the wisdom that we preach, as appears by their crucifying the Lord of glory. These men that were wise and prudent, not only in their own opinion, but in the public voice of fame, are all in the dark about the great article of salvation. And,

Thirdly, These things he reveals unto *babes*; sometimes, to such as were *literally so*; for out of the mouths of sucklings he ordained strength. Of this he gave the world a sample at his triumphant entry into *Jerusalem*, when the children sung before him, *Hosannah to the Son of David, blessed be the kingdom of the Lord, Hosannah in the highest*. To this they were press'd by a miraculous influence, as he saith, *If these should altogether hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out*. But I believe the name that he calls 'em by signifies the *lowliness of their preparation*, that they were no more fit for the design than so many *babes*: they were so far from speaking other tongues, that they could hardly speak their own. This is a thing that our Lord contemplates

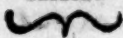
Pf. viii. 2.

Luke xix.  
37.

templates a long while before it was accomplish'd. S E R M. XXX.  
He does not only acquiesce in it; *So, Father, it seem'd good in thy sight*, but it made him rejoice in spirit: Tho' but a little before, he had complain'd how vain his own attempts had been for the reformation of the world in *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, yet in that hour he felt all these joys within him.

And whom did he chuse, but men of an obscure character? *Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?* How? by laying all aside in spreading the Gospel: *For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God: it pleas'd God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.* It was once reckon'd wonderful, that he march'd the employment of his servant in a private life, to what he design'd him for of a more public nature: *He chose David from following the sheep, and feeding the ewes great with young, to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance.* There's both a beauty and a surprize in the similitude. And so he did here; He calls a company of persons out of ships or boats where they were mending their nets, and tells 'em, he would make 'em *fishers of men*. Upon this they forsook all and follow'd him: a strange call, and a strange obedience!

*Moses*, tho' he had been brought up at court, and was skill'd in all the wisdom and learning of the *Egyptians*, cries out, *Lord, who am I that I should speak to Pharaoh?* He pleads his being of *uncircumcis'd lips*, by which I suppose he means some unhappines in his pronounciation; because God gives him these answers: *Who has made man's mouth? or who made the dumb? and I know that Aaron thy brother can speak well.* But there's more room for the objection in a company of poor people who scarce ever went farther than the lake of *Tiberias*.

S E R M. Might not they have thought it an extraordinary  
 XXX.  proposal, to be told that they should go over the  
 world, and confront the learning of all the places  
 that they came into, by the success of their Gos-  
 pel, *leading princes away spoil'd, and making judges*  
*fools? Ye shall be brought, saith their great Master,*  
 Luke xxi. *before kings and rulers for my name's sake, and it shall*  
 12, 13, *turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your*  
 14, 15, *hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer; for*  
*I will give you a mouth and a wisdom which all your*  
*adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist.*

This was a surprize to the council at Jerusalem:  
 Acts iv. *They perceiv'd the boldness of Peter and John, and see-*  
 23. *ing that they were ignorant and unlearn'd men, they*  
*marvell'd at it, and took knowledge of 'em that they*  
*had been with Jesus. So that here, you see, they*  
*renew the questions that had been put about Christ*  
*himself: How knows this man letters, having never*  
 Mar. vi. 3. *learn'd? and, Is not this the carpenter's son; from*  
*whence then had he these mighty works? And yet they*  
*perceiv'd in them such a boldness as gave 'em a*  
*great deal more than a courage to speak; for that*  
*of itself is not always an excellency: but this took*  
*into it the several capacities of reasoning, that they*  
*spake with an evidence that was neither to be daunt-*  
*ed nor evaded.*

Was it likely, that in such hands as these the  
 greatest wisdom that was ever made known to the  
 world should get forwards into the nations afar  
 off, and like the power of the sun, nothing should  
 be hid from the heat that attended it? This is a  
 mystery indeed, and shews the value of that effu-  
 sion in which the Spirit was given out. For these  
 disciples were very raw and unprepar'd even after  
 Christ's resurrection to undertake a matter of so  
 much importance. They did not understand the  
 nature of that kingdom which they were to preach;  
 but when they were endu'd with a power from on  
 high,



## GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 435

high, it was a sending forth both of *light and* S E R M.  
*truth.* As our Lord tells 'em, *I have many things* XXX.  
*to say, but ye cannot bear 'em now; howbeit, when* Joh. xvi.  
*He the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all* 12, 13.  
*truth.* He made 'em ministers according to the gift Eph. iii. 7.  
*of the grace of God, given to 'em by the effectual work-*  
*ing of his power.*

2. 'Tis still farther a mystery, in the way that  
 God took to spread this Gospel among the Gen-  
 tiles, that he should raise up these men to run all  
 manner of dangers, who might have liv'd secure  
 and protected: *He set forth the Apostles, as it were* 1 Cor. iv.  
*appointed to death; they were made a spectacle to the* 9. = 13.  
*world, to Angels, and to men; fools for Christ's sake,*  
*weak and despis'd: they hungred and thirsted, were nak-*  
*ed and buffeted, and had no certain dwelling place:*  
*they labour'd working with their own hands; revil'd,*  
*persecuted, defam'd, made the filth of the world, and*  
*the offscouring of all things.* And yet he dealt fairly by  
 'em: He gave 'em such warnings and instructions  
 about the work, as would rather have frightened peo-  
 ple, than perswaded 'em into it: *The time comes* Joh. xvi.  
*that he that kills you will think he does God service;* 2, 3.  
*and these things they will do unto you, because they have*  
*not known the Father nor me.* He tells Peter in par-  
 ticular, *When thou wast young, thou wentest whither*  
*thou wouldst, that part of thy life was easie enough;*  
*but when thou shalt be old, they shall bind thee, and* xxi. 18;  
*carry thee whither thou wouldst not; and this he said* 19.  
*signifying by what death he should glorifie God.*

But that very consideration of his death made  
 it easie to him; he calls it no more than putting off 2 Pet. i.  
*this tabernacle, as the Lord Jesus Christ had shew'd to* 14.  
*him.* Another Apostle saith, this was his earnest Phil. i. 20.  
*expectation and desire, that in all things Christ may be*  
*magnified in his body, whether it be by life or death.*  
 Many of his followers, when he open'd to 'em the  
 hardships that were coming on, *went back,* Joh. vi. 66.

S E R M. *walk'd no more with him.* Swarms of such as those  
 XXX. have gone off in every age; *Demas* forsook *Paul*,  
 2 Tim. i. and *all they in Asia* left him. But Christ knew whom  
 15. he had chosen, and the virtue of that choice. There  
 Acts xv. were many who *hazarded their lives for the sake of*  
 26. *the Lord Jesus.* 'Tis almost an indisputable maxim  
 in our day, that take away preferments and rewards  
 from preachers, and the church is in danger: but  
 here are ministers that had not so much as an hu-  
 man protection. I hope then the number of hire-  
 lings in this age leaves us in no doubt of the my-  
 4 Cor. vi. *stery* that ever Christ should be preach'd to the  
 4 5. *Gentiles, by those who approv'd themselves the mi-  
 nisters of God in much patience, afflictions, necessities,  
 distresses; in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults.*  
*This is well express'd by a Poet of our own.*

From whence but heaven could men, unskill'd in  
 arts,  
 In different ages born, in several parts,  
 Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why,  
 Should all conspire to cheat us with a lye?  
 Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,  
 Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price?

3. The great wonder of all is, that they should  
 be qualified with the gift of tongues. This was  
 a thing never heard of before; it only came to pass  
 in the last days. God usually employ'd his pro-  
 phets in their own country, or in those neighbour-  
 ing kingdoms where the language was much the  
 same; but here are men sent to all nations, to every  
 Col. i. 23. *creature under heaven*, and wherever they come, they  
 have no need to speak by an interpreter, which is  
 both a slow and a cold way of conversation. And  
 this he design'd to distinguish as a mystery, be-  
 cause it is the peculiar of that age, and that sett of  
 2 Cor. xiii. *preachers: for tongues were to cease*, and this sort of  
 8. *knowledge*

knowledge to vanish away. As no generation had it S E R M.  
before, so none had it after; for which we may XXX.  
give several reasons.

This was to be the handfel of a Redeemer's government below, and the first assurance of his welcome above. He had but newly left his disciples, not without the contempt of the world, and some diffidence in themselves. What they wanted to know was, whether this death which had been so scandalous on earth, had met with any more credit in heaven, and to be secure that his empire among men was establish'd, and should be promoted. Well, this they are to be convinc'd of by such an effusion of the Spirit, as was never known to their fathers, and should never be renew'd to their children: *He being exalted by the right hand of God, and having receiv'd of the Father the promise of the holy Ghost, shed forth that which they saw and heard.*

Thus the salvation, that began to be spoke to the world Heb. ii. 4  
by the Lord Jesus, was afterwards confirm'd by those that heard him, God bearing 'em witness by divers signs, and miracles, and gifts of the holy Ghost according to his own will. These tongues were to be for a sign that the commission was from God, and also a means of making known to the Gentiles what was appointed for obedience of faith among all nations thra' the name of Christ. Rom. xvi. 26.

At the building of *Babel*, which the sons of men design'd for a tower to reach to heaven, God came down and confounded their language. This was a new embarrassment to the truth; it was from that time a great deal harder for people to help one another in useful knowledge. But here was going to be another tower, that should actually reach to heaven, a building of God, an house not made with hands: he therefore comes down, and razes out the former confusion. Tho' the world continu'd to talk many languages, yet he furnish'd a sett of men



S. E. R. M. with capacities to speak 'em all: *They spake with  
 XXX. other tongues, as the Spirit gave 'em utterance. Thus  
 many ran to and fro, and knowledge was increased.*  
 Acts ii. 4. *After the Lord had spoken to 'em, he was receiv'd up  
 Dan. xii. 4. into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God; and  
 Mar. xiv. 19, 20. they went forth, and preach'd every where.*

4. He call'd most of 'em to seal this truth with their blood, which was the highest testimony that nature could give to what grace had taught: *They  
 Rev. xii. 11. overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of  
 their testimony; no terror could drive 'em from it. By their fall they conquer'd; their dying was voluntary, they lov'd not their lives unto the death. There was something else which they lov'd better. Now, this is so far from being a duty, that by the law of nature, it is the greatest of sins. 'Tis also against all the course of nature; it overrules the first principle in it, and that is self-preservation: No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but lov'd and cherish'd it. And when any were witnesses to a cause that way, you must suppose they had in 'em either something below nature, or something above it.*

And yet thus it was with them: *Paul at his conversion was shewn what great things he should suffer  
 Acts ix. 16. for the name of Christ: 'twas but a rough setting out, for the Jews to go about to kill him, as soon as he begun to preach the Gospel. He had a narrow  
 3 Cor. xi. ult. 'scape from Aretas the king of Damascus, when he was let down the wall by a basket. He was thrown out of all the favour and fame that he had so long courted in the Jewish nation, and yet he looks  
 Phil. iii. 8. back upon it with a noble unconcern: He counted it but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffer'd the loss of all things, and counted 'em but dung, that he might  
 2 Cor. xi. 23, 27. win Christ. He was in labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times he receiv'd forty stripes save one.  
 Thrice*

## GOD preach'd to the Gentiles. 439

*Thrice he was beaten with rods, once he was ston'd, thrice he suffer'd shipwreck, a day and a night he was in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, robbers, by his own countrymen, heathens, in the city, the wilderness, the sea, and among false brethren. Nor did these things grieve and tire him out: but when the time of his departure is at hand, he is ready to be offer'd up, having fought a good fight, and finish'd his course, and kept the faith, without which all the rest had been impossible.* SERM. XXX.

Now, let us see FOR WHOM they did this.

1. 'Tis plain they took it for the cause of *Christ*.
2. They depended upon *his* presence with 'em.
3. This was as much as they could do for God, and as much as they could expect from him.

1. 'Tis evident by all the profession they made that this was for the sake of *Christ*. They were witnesses of him; they bore the testimony of *Jesus*, Col. i. 28. whom they preach'd, warning every man. Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do? was the language of *Saul*. *Ananias* tells him, The Lord, even *Jesus* who appear'd unto thee in the way as thou camest, has sent me to thee that thou mightest know HIS will, and be filled with the holy Ghost. He was to see that just One, and hear the word of HIS mouth, and be HIS witness to all men. The Gospel that he preach'd was neither receiv'd of man, nor by man, but by the revelation of *Jesus Christ*. To this purpose, saith our Saviour, have I appear'd unto thee, to make thee a minister and a witness of these things that thou hast seen, and those in which I will farther appear unto thee. He determin'd to know, or make known nothing but *Jesus Christ*, and him crucified; which in the former verse he had call'd the testimony of GOD. He preach'd not himself, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*, and himself a servant for *Jesus sake*, still referring the ultimate glory thither. Sometimes they were call'd the servants of God in the Gospel of his Son, and the ser-

S E R M. wants of the most high God, who shew'd the way of  
 XXX. salvation. Thus saith Paul, *God is my record, whom I serve with a pure conscience.* But these expressions are so thrown in common with others, of our preaching, serving and obeying Christ, that if they do not mean the same, here are two things unhappy  
 Rom. ii. 6. pily confounded in one description. *The Gospel of Christ is call'd the power of God.*

2. In this work they depended on HIS presence with 'em. He would not leave them comfortless, but *come and see them.* After his resurrection, the  
 Joh. xx. disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. He spake  
 20. to them forty days of things pertaining to the kingdom  
 Acts i. 2. of GOD. This was delightful conversation indeed! They were afraid of the Jews, and had the doors shut, but when Jesus came in, those fears would soon be over. He might say then with more impression than he had done before, *It is I, be not afraid.* During that stage, between his coming out of the grave, and his going up into glory, they were rais'd above all their troubles. But, what should they do afterwards, when, as he tells them, they must *see him no more*? That is, they were to *know him no more after the flesh.*

Well, that they might be provided for all dangers, when he sends them to disciple all nations, he promises to be *with 'em always to the end of the world.* I don't envy our critics all their gains by the interpretation of these words, viz. that they signify no more than to the end of that age. For though that uncomfortable exposition may be easily dissolved, yet *even this* carries more in it than they would gladly allow. For according to their own way of reckoning, Christ might be present with the Apostles after he was gone to heaven; that he could be both upon earth and in heaven at one time; and if he could do this for the space of forty years, he can as easily do it till the consumma-  
 tion

Matth.  
 xxviii.  
 20.



tion of all things. It was this that carried the <sup>S E R M.</sup> Apostles thro' all their troubles. *I will deliver thee,* <sup>XXX.</sup> saith he to *Paul, from the people, and the Gentiles, to whom I send thee.* And when he speaks of the success of this promise that was given him by *Christ*, he calls it *obtaining help from God.* The one is <sup>Act. xxvi.</sup> plainly match'd unto the other, being only two <sup>20.</sup> parts of the same speech.

3. This was as much duty as they could pay to the great God, and this presence as much as they could expect from him. Was it only a creature, for the advancing of whose kingdom, there were such preparations made, as the world never knew before? Consider three things, he had the greatest glory that ever was given, the most entire duty that could ever be paid, and he maintain'd this interest in the most divine way that ever was heard of.

(1.) The glory design'd for him was of the greatest sort. It exceeded all that could be fetch'd out of the creation. *The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, and the firmament shews his handy-* <sup>Psal. xix. 1, 2, 3.</sup> *work. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night declares knowledge; and there is no voice or language where their speech is not heard.* What Lord is this who has his honour so establish'd in those bright and rolling worlds, but the Lord that made them? the Supreme Being *by whom are all things, and for whom are all things?* The Scripture has shewn us that this is his work, *Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth, and the heaven is the work of his hands.* <sup>Hcb. i. 10.</sup>

And therefore that notion that the great God created the second Person, and then order'd him to make the world, must be handled very gently, or it will be crush'd before the moth. We read of no such *round-about creation.* The Bible represents all these things as done by his own voice; *He*  
spake

S E R M *spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast:*

XXX.

Ps. xxxiii.  
6, 7.

*By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the hosts of them by the breath of his mouth. We*

*read of no such officer as the new scheme calls an instrument. We understand no other author of the universe than him who has the glory of it.*

*Not an Angel in heaven dare arrogate to himself the making of a worm, the rearing up of a plant; no, they talk of the world as the immediate production of Omnipotence. Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Thro'*

Rev. iv. ult. *faith we understand that the worlds were fram'd by the word of God, so that the things which are seen,*

Heb. xi. 3 *were not made of things that do appear. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things that brings out their host by number; he calls them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power.*

But now there's a greater glory than this; that is, there's a nobler design, and a more wondrous performance, and that is the redemption of a chosen people. The Scripture has given this the preference, and the honour of it is left upon Christ, not as exclusive of the Father, but in such a way as is maintain'd by what he saith, *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* And again, *Now is the*

Joh. xvi. 33. *Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; if God be glorified in him, God shall glorifie him in himself. He speaks this of the success of that great design that he came about. There's more of God to be seen in this affair than there was in any other, and where are we to look for it? Well, he that brought*

2 Cor. iv. 6. *light out of darkness, gives us the light of the glory of God in the face or person of Jesus Christ.*

And can we think that the supreme God is to rejoice in the work of his hands, that the earth is full of his riches? Is he to be honour'd in what we see he has done? And shall a glory much greater

greater and more sublime be given to one who by <sup>S E R M.</sup> nature is no God? Shall he who has the name only <sup>XXX.</sup> by virtue of an office have an extent of empire which the Father never claim'd? Shall *all the ends of the earth* look unto the Son, and he be no more than a titular Deity, when the real God was only known in *Judah*, and had his name great in *Israel*? Must there be an effusion of the Spirit, a gift of tongues, a thing that never had been in the world before, and it's likely never shall be again, and all this to establish the interest of a creature? For it is Christ in whom *all the seed of Israel are to be justified and to glory.*

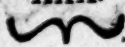
The Gospel of the kingdom is call'd the *world to come*, and methinks there's a dignity in the title; it was future to the *Jews*, 'tis the last dispensation that God will give, and it bears upon it the glory of the state above. Now it is observ'd, that *to none of the Angels has he put in subjection the world* <sup>Heb. ii. 5.</sup> *to come of which we speak.* He has put kingdoms and armies in subjection to an Angel, by making him the minister of providence; but here's an affair that none of them must preside in: And can we imagine, that so much care should be taken to tell us, that not one of the Angels has this dominion, and yet that it's given to another creature? If he is so very express and peremptory in laying aside the Angels, we should have thought it was because he has so often said, *His glory he will not give to another.* And therefore how comes one who was less than an Angel to have it, but from the consideration of a nature more *above* theirs than what he took upon him was *below* 'em? You find the An<sup>gels</sup> praising God for creating *the heavens and the ea<sup>th</sup>, and the fountains of waters*; and yet the Lamb is proclaim'd as the author of a much greater work. The lower the grosser glories are ascrib'd to the supreme God, and will he communi-  
cate



S E R M. cate those to any beneath himself which are the fruit  
 XXX. of a nobler contrivance? No, Christ Jesus is there-  
 fore made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanc-  
 tification and redemption, that according as it is writ-  
 ten, he that glories, may glory in the LORD.

(2.) These people who preach'd Christ among the Gentiles could never go farther in their duty to the great God than they did to him. None of us, Rom. xiv. say they, *lives to himself, and none dies to himself; 7. 8. 9. for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the Lords.* 'Tis Jesus whom he speaks of as this Lord, as you see by the next words, *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and reviv'd, that HE might be the Lord both of dead and living.* Thus the argument runs, *Ye are not your own, but bought with a price; and therefore glorify God in your bodies, and your spirits, which are God's.* You are not your own, *Whose are you then?* If being bought with a price, makes you belong to another, it must be to Him who paid that price: And who can that be? Or how are you to express his propriety in you, but by *glorifying him as God*, and looking upon your bodies and spirits to be his? They are said to be *God's*, and therefore if he who paid this price is not God, what he did gives him no claim upon us.

You see that this text will take a great deal of garbling to distinguish the shares of duty between the Father and the Son, if the one is the supreme Being, and the other but a creature. Thus when Phil. i. 20. the Apostle saith, it was *his earnest expectation, his desire, his confidence, that as at all times, so now CHRIST should be magnified in his mortal body, whether it be by life or by death; for saith he, To me to live is Christ.* Could he possibly go any farther in a profession of duty to the most high God? And has the Scripture been so lavish in claiming

our service to Christ, that there is not the least de-<sup>S E R M.</sup>  
gree more reserv'd for a Being that's infinitely greater <sup>XXX.</sup>  
than he? 

Supposè we had never read any more than what the Apostle preach'd at *Athens*, that they ought not to think the Godhead like unto gold or silver, or stone graven with art and man's device, but look upon him as a Being that *made the heavens, the earth, and the sea, and all things therein*; one whose image we are, in *whom we live, and move, and have our being*. He adds, that this God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom he has ordained, whereof he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead. Had we never read any more of Christ than what he saith here, we might have thought him to be nothing higher than a man. Now it is not to the human nature that he has committed this judgment; for tho' he that is the judge is a man, yet he must be *more* for that design.

But why should he ever be represented as God? Why does the Apostle in other places give him higher titles than he uses to these *Athenians*? The consequence of this can be only ensnaring us in our duty if he is not God; and, for my part, I shall have no regard to their new schemes, till they can tell me how far I'm to go in my devotion to a Saviour, and where I am to stop. For the Scripture has made it very dangerous to love him too little: Such a one must be *Anathema Maranatha*; and I'm sure it is idolatry to love him too much. And you need not say this is impossible, for if he is a creature, it's a very easy matter, and what the Psalmist would have been afraid of, when he said, *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee.* <sup>Psal. lxxiii; 25.</sup>

# 446 Great is the MYSTERY, &c.

S E R M. (3.) Christ maintains his interest in the most di-  
 XXX. vine way, by a spiritual presence with his people;  
 so that though his body is in heaven, he is still in  
 every Christian; and we dare not say to any but  
 Pf.cxxxix. God, *Thou compassest my path, and my lying down,*  
 3. 5. *and art acquainted with all my ways. Thou hast be-*  
*set me behind and before, and laid thy hand upon me.*  
 The heavens have receiv'd him till the time of the  
 restitution of all things, yet it is language peculi-  
 ar to a God to say, *I will walk among them, and*  
*be in them.* And we may soon suppose what sen-  
 Gal. ii. 20. timents Paul had of him, when he saith, *I am cru-*  
*cified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but*  
*Christ lives in me, and the life I live in the flesh I*  
*live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and*  
*gave himself for me.*



S E R -



# SERMON XXXI. July 5. 1723.



Am now to shew you that this branch S E R M.  
XXXI.  
of Christianity enjoys the same beautiful character that's given of all the rest, that it is a mystery of G O D L I N E S S, and promotes a *pure and undefiled religion before God and our Father.* Jam. i. 27. For this was Christ himself a preacher of righteousness; for this did he ordain his witnesses among those he had chosen; for this is the same *faithful word committed to others*, who are charged to hold it fast, and to hold it forth. To this end is the word of salvation sent among you. We therefore insist upon a *hope that is laid up for you in heaven, that it may bring forth fruit in you, as it does in all the world* where it is heartily believed. Col. i. 5, 6; And I think, this being the business of our preaching, the design of the ministry that we have received, it is supposed, that, in order to fulfil it, we proclaim the Divinity of that glorious Person whose name is to be carried among the Gentiles. For, he says, *from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to MY name, and a pure offering; for MY name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts.* Mal. i. 11.

If he is not God, we are sent upon a foolish errand, and tell the heathen no more than they imagine already, that there are supreme and subordinate deities. Perhaps indeed, their number of  
*under-*

# 448      *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

**S E R M.** *under-gods* is greater than ours in the new scheme;  
**XXXI.** but the substance of their religion is the very same  
 with what some people have given us for primitive  
 Christianity. They talk of a Trinity, by which  
 they mean no more than one God, and two crea-  
**Iſa. xl. 18.** tures. But *to whom will ye liken me, or shall I be*  
*equal, saith the holy one?* Now as this is wide from  
 the revelation that's given us in the Gospel, so it  
 is subversive of all that practice, by which we are

**Tit. ii. 10.** *to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour.*

I will here endeavour to shew you the diffe-  
 rent tendency of preaching Christ as the true *God*,  
 and giving him only the *name*; and by comparing  
 these two sorts of ministers, you will easily see  
 which of 'em is most likely to promote the refor-  
 mation of sinners, and the comfort of believers.  
 And here, don't suppose that I am covering a cow-  
 ardly design under a shew of deceitful words. When  
 I say that the Son is God, I mean as much by the  
 title, as if I apply'd it to the Father; and without  
 such an upright unreserved way of talking, I should  
 both impose upon you, and betray the doctrines  
 of the Gospel. Now, I say, that they who in  
 preaching *the unsearchable riches of Christ* tell the  
*Gentiles* that he is truly, eternally, and supremely  
 God, are most likely to attain the ends of the mi-  
 nistry of reconciliation that is committed to them.  
 Because

These men speak plain, we know what they mean;  
 they come with a subject of their ministry that  
 deserves to be so; the account they give us of the  
 Gospel revelation is most agreeable to the merci-  
 ful nature of our God, who never design'd to be-  
 tray us into idolatry; 'tis such a report as answers  
 the demand they make of our duty; 'tis harmo-  
 nious to the nature of that dependence that we  
 must have upon Christ; it provides for all the  
 comfort

comfort we can stand in need of, and it gives a better prospect of the future glory when we know the person from whom we expect it is a God. S E R M. XXXI.

1. That minister who preaches up the divinity of Christ, and tells the world plainly, that he is no other than the most high God, is likely to promote religion among men, because he speaks out. We see, we know what he means. We are ministers according to the faith of God's elect, and the ACKNOWLEDGING of the truth, which is after godliness: Tit. i. 1; 2, 3.  
*In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but has in due time manifested his word through preaching, which is committed to us, according to the commandment of God our Saviour.* God never sent men abroad to shuffle with their learning, and make their skill in criticisms, original languages, and antient writers, no more than an occasion to throw the world into the greatest uncertainties about the chief object of their faith and hope. *Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? Shall their mouth utter their iniquity, and they choose the tongue of the crafty?* Job xv. 2; 3, 5.

Is that the fruit of studying Greek and Hebrew, of turning over vast volumes of antiquity, that we shall grow more capable of unhinging mankind, removing 'em from their old foundation, without the honesty of shewing 'em another. The Lord God gave to Christ the tongue of the learned that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary, not set him a rambling in eternal mazes, by words that are never to be understood. Are those men of God's raising up, whose divinity goes no farther than to strike off our faith from the person on whom it was fix'd, and never tell us what's to become



# 450 *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

S E R M. become of it? Is that to be the result of all their  
 XXXI. enquiries, that they will use a good spirit, just as  
 our Saviour saith it fares with an evil one; that it

Psal. xi. 3. *is sent abroad, seeking rest and finding none? If the  
 foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*

No good end ever was answer'd, or ever can be,  
 by those shuffling arts, that leave the hearer more  
 uncertain than they found him. If my opinion  
 is agreeable to the will of God, I may tell it bold-

Eph. vi. 19, ly, for so I ought to speak: *Seeing we have such hope*

20. *we use great plainness of speech; not putting a vail*

2 Cor. iii. *over our faces as Moses did; renouncing the hidden*

12, 13. *things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor hand-*

iv. 2. *ling the word of the Lord deceitfully.* The servants of

such a master ought to use no disguise and no re-  
 serve; and for my part I can see no other end an-  
 swer'd than to confound the world, when men are  
 afraid to call our Saviour a creature, and yet take  
 all the pains they can to prove him so.

What a scheme must that be, that allows him  
 neither to be a *God* nor a *creature*? That explains  
 away the *first* name, and trembles at giving the *se-*  
*cond*? What's the reason that men do not speak  
 out? Why must our doctrine be rejected for be-  
 ing mysterious and self-contradicting, when here's  
 another put upon us that appears to be *so* at the  
 first opening? How monstrous is it to talk of a  
 created God? Or, of one that was not created, and  
 yet had a beginning? Of a time that he was not,  
 and yet that he is eternal? Of infinite perfections,  
 and yet all deriv'd? Of an Omniscience that does  
 not know all things, and an Omnipotence that can-  
 not do all things? Really this is not disputing a-  
 bout actions, but expressions; 'tis robbing us not  
 only of doctrines but of words; 'tis using them  
 in divinity, as they must be us'd no where else.

2 Cor. i. *But we write no other things than what you read or*  
 13. *acknowledge,*

## God preach'd to the Gentiles.

451

acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge even E R M.  
XXXI.  
to the end.

Where's the necessity of a minister's doubling at this vile rate? Can we ever think that God sent out any of his servants upon such a foolish errand? Why must not mankind know what they mean? What good end can they propound to themselves, by deceiving people with *confessions*, and then explaining all the sense of them away; leading the world into a confidence of their believing what indeed they abhor, and only waiting for a proper season to laugh at the credulity of those they've impos'd on? "For my part, if I did not believe  
" that Christ is *over all, God blessed for ever*, in the  
" same sense that the Father is so, I should think  
" it my duty to preach back what I have been  
" advancing among you, not call your faith *to him*,  
" but call it *from him*: I durst not for any lucre  
" of filth or fame, leave you at an uncertainty  
" what I'm speaking of, nor could I expect any  
" blessing upon that sermon which gives such a  
" character of Jesus Christ, that all the people who  
" hear it, know not whether I'm describing a God  
" or a creature, as if I was raising up an *altar with*  
" *this inscription, To the unknown God*. It does not  
" only leave you hovering about a truth, but at  
" a full stand in your duty.

We bid you *believe in him*; but can any mortal determine what's meant by this faith, if he does not know the object upon which it is to fix? The Apostles told their minds plainly in the face of as much danger as ever persons did; but *as they* 1 Thes. ii,  
4, 5:  
*were allow'd of God, and put in trust with the Gospel,*  
*so they spake not as pleasing men, but God that searches*  
*the hearts; neither did they at any time use flattering*  
*words, accommodating their doctrines to the hu-*  
*mour of their hearers, nor a cloak of covetousness.*

G g 2

That

## 452 *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

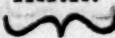
S E R M. That opinion does not look like truth, that's afraid  
 XXXI. of shewing it self. If you see any light twinkling,  
 and then falling back again, sometimes out, and  
 sometimes in, you may be sure it's not the sun, but  
 a trifling vapour, that appears for a moment and  
 then vanishes away: And as it comes out of  
 a *hog*, it will lead you into one. But I hope *we*  
 2 Cor. ii. *are not as many who corrupt the word of God, but as*  
 17. *of sincerity as of God, in the sight of God speak we in*  
*Christ.*

2. They who preach up Christ as the most high  
 God, do insist upon such an object of their ministry  
 as deserves to be so. What a poor business would  
 it be for men to have a miraculous furniture and  
 a miraculous vocation, the gift of tongues, and  
 the continual guard of providence, and all this to  
 make known a creature? That when they rejoic'd  
 so much in the title of being the servants of Christ,  
 they should mean no more by it than their attach-  
 ment to one who had nothing higher than deriv'd  
 perfections! Do they go and preach up one who  
 is not to be ador'd?

That they speak of him in a nature that is *not*  
 omnipotent, and must not be worship'd, that was  
 dependent and passive, is true enough; but they  
 had never been sent out into the world, to tell  
 mankind that he was born and liv'd with our in-  
 firmities, that he died and was buried. No, they  
 must be *witnesses* to these facts; but their being  
*servants* to him supposes a higher character, that he  
 had in him a nature that had no beginning, no  
 bounds, no pain, no death; therefore they might  
 well talk of such a one to the world, because he  
 Joh. i. 3. made it: for *without him was not any thing made*  
*that was made.*

Consider what it is to preach Christ Jesus. There's  
 a homage in this work, which no creature has ever  
challeng'd



challeng'd from us. The vile way of the Papists S E R M. XXXI.  
 in running over the story of a saint, proposing   
 him as a pattern, and offering his dry bones for  
 the help of faith, is profane and foolish. *When they* I sa. viii. 19.  
*say to you, seek to them that have familiar spirits, and*  
*to wizards, that peep and mutter, should not a people*  
*seek to their God? for the living to the dead?* The  
 root of such a doctrine is rottenness, and the blos-  
 som of it shall go up as dust. We may, and do  
 mention the lives of ministers and eminent chris-  
 tians, bidding you *follow their faith, and consider the* Heb. xiii.  
*end of their conversation*; but will any man call this 7.  
*preaching of Moses or Paul?* Nay, the very An-  
 gels who do us so many kind offices are not the  
 subject of our ministry. We may preach of them as  
 they are *ministring spirits to the heirs of salvation*,  
 but that is not calling mankind to depend upon  
 'em. They will not allow us to do any thing  
 that has the least resemblance of an adoration. The  
 Apostle *John* was much obliged to that Angel  
 whom Christ had sent with a revelation of things  
 to come; he had led him thro' the apartments of  
 the new *Jerusalem*; he had shew'd him that glo-  
 rious city *coming down from God out of heaven*, and  
 yet he will not allow the good man to fall down Rev. xii. 9.  
 at his feet.

I cannot imagine that the Apostle design'd him  
 what we call religious worship; for you must think  
 him grossly ignorant, if he could after all these  
 discoveries confound his homage to God by giv-  
 ing it equally to him and to a creature; but he  
 thought some degree of extraordinary respect ought  
 to be shewn, and this the Angel will not suffer for  
 that awful reason, *Worship thou God.*

Might he not easily have distinguish'd about  
 worship as some do in our day, and said, There's  
 a devotion that I pay to none but God, and this

S E R M. subordinate duty to thee is no breach of that?  
 XXXI. But the Angel leaves no room for that whiffing talk; he intimates, that there is always to be the greatest and most visible distinction between our behaviour to God, and that to a creature, let him be never so glorious and benevolent. Well,

Bring this to the case of our Saviour; if he was only a creature, he would always use the same freedom with his people that he did with the young man in the Gospel, who took him for no more.

Matt. xix. *Why callest thou me good, there is none good but one, and that is God.* But when we preach Him, it's in the

17. same way that we preach the Father, that he is the *Lord of the ends of the earth*, the God for whom are all things, and by whom are all things; we could not go out in the service of one less than He. The heathen shall never have it to say of us, as we may of their priests, that we are servants of those who

Gal. iv. 8. *by nature are no gods.* Angels themselves are preachers of this Saviour, and what can that be owing to? Not his taking upon him our nature, for that made him lower than they; not his having a created nature above 'em, for that would no more make him the object of *their* worship than their superiority to us makes them the object of *ours*; but they consider him as their Author, and as their End, from whose hand they receiv'd their being,

Col. i. 16, and to whose glory they must refer it. For by  
 17. *him were all things created in heaven and in earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him: He is before all things, and by him all things consist.* 'Tis plain he speaks of him here under another nature from what he does in the next clause, that *he is the first-begotten from the dead*; That did not prove him before all things, because it happen'd in these last days.

No wonder that they who do not look upon <sup>S E R M.</sup> him as a God, have more zeal against his divinity <sup>XXXI.</sup> than they have for his honour. That all their strength, and time, and learning, should not be to lead on our duty to a Saviour, but to limit it, to stun it, to confound it. They cannot be said to preach Christ Jesus, *warning every man, and teaching every man.* They do warn every man indeed, not to look on him as a God, but they can hardly be said to teach every man; for if *the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battel?* and least of all do they think to present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. No really, if he is a creature, there's no hopes of any perfection in him. It is said of a person who loves the light, *that he comes to the light, that it may be made manifest, that his deeds are wrought in God;* and I should be asham'd to talk of your perfection IN CHRIST, if I did not think it an expression of the same import and value. But be it known to you, that our ministry is *not of deceit or guile.* We speak of him who is the former of all things, and therefore are not asham'd of the Gospel of CHRIST, *because* <sup>Rom.i.16.</sup> *it is the power of God.* The Apostle speaks of *the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, that was committed to his trust,* and adds in the same breath, *I thank* <sup>1 Tim. i. 11, 12.</sup> *Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, putting me into the ministry.*

3. This account agrees with the merciful nature of God, that he should tell us things without the least disguise. *The words of the Lord are pure words.* <sup>Psal. xii.6.</sup> He has call'd Angels and kings by his own name, they are gods, but what a bar is there between his title and theirs? *Who in the heavens can be compar'd unto the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?* <sup>Ps. lxxxix. 6.</sup> The Scripture has thrown us into no danger of confounding the two sorts of deities.



# 456 *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

S E R M. deities, No mortal can say, if he worships a prince,  
XXXI. that he takes him to be omniscient and eternal, tho'  
he is call'd a god.

The greatest affair that we can have upon our hands, is a devotion to him that made us; and therefore had he left us in the dark, whom to worship, and whom not, he had thrown his own glory under a cloud, and the souls of mankind into a snare. But it is written with all plainness,  
Matt. iv. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only*  
10. *shalt thou serve.* And how unhappy is it for us, that the duty we pay to Christ should go by the same name, and be expressed as if given in the same degree both in heaven and in earth, if he is not God?

To tell us that we ought to distinguish, is to tell us nothing to the purpose. The question is, whether the difference lies so plain, that he that runs may read it? 'Tis but a poor answer, to say there are men of critical learning who can soften and curtail the greatest names that are given to a Saviour, and divest 'em of their greatest sense. What becomes of the ignorant, who are the more numerous part of the world? Could they find it out in the Scripture-trinity, that the first person is divine and adorable, the second divine but not adorable, the third neither adorable nor divine? Do not say, that it is not necessary for these to speak of a Trinity, an hypostatical union, or the imputation of another's righteousness; that a man may be very good and serious without entring into these speculations. How dangerous is an insinuation of this nature? Can a person be religious who worships he knows not what? who is at a loss whether Christ Jesus is the object of his reverence or no? who either does not know God, and not glorify him *as God?* or on the other hand is serving a creature

creature equally with the Creator, who is over all, S E R M.  
XXXI.  
blessed for ever?

Here's a good man may be a believer, and yet at a loss about the object of his faith. The love of Christ constrains him, and yet he knows not who Christ is. *He thus judges, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died, that they who live, should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again.* 'Tis as much as could be said of the great God, that we live to him, and yet it is said to one who by these men is suppos'd infinitely beneath him. But blessed be God, those good people who will suffer no deviations from their duty, are in no uncertainty about him to whom it is given, he is declared to be the son of God with power. *They know in whom they have believed.* As he is called God, they depend upon him with full confidence, and it's pity that they who shew'd such a zeal for the Gospel in all ages should be left in the dark, and be all along strangers to a truth that is now brought to light by men that are not much superior to them in holiness, whatever they are in politeness.

4. When we preach Christ as God, it answers the demand of your duty to him. We bid you pray to him, call upon him, trust in him, and wait for him; which is more than we durst do for a creature, because 'tis as much as we can do for a God. Had we preach'd under the old Testament, we must have insisted upon the glory of God, and the faithfulness of *Moses*: That the great God had revealed his will, and *Moses* was the person by whom the world should have it, and therefore they are to believe in the one according to what they hear of him by the other. But there would be no confounding of these two. Certainly we must talk in a very unhappy way, if any of our hear-  
ers

## 458 *The Mystery of GODLINESS,*

S E R M.ers should suppose we call'd for the same duty to  
XXXI. *Moses* that we did to God.

And yet in this promiscuous manner do we speak  
Joh. xiv. 1. of the Father and the Son. *You believe in God,* saith  
Christ, *believe also in me.* We dare make no distinction, the words are plain, they need no changing: but upon such a text, others will bring in a *Scripture-consequence*, tho' we may not; that is, they will apply a consequence to destroy the truth, and they are angry that we take such a method to maintain it. We are commanded by these men to bring plain words of Scripture without any human explication; when we do so, they will not let them stand, but strive to take off their native force and lustre by the very method of interpretation which they deny to others.

If Christ has not infinite perfections, what have we been doing among you? Our preaching is in vain, and your faith in vain. We have argu'd, threaten'd, call'd, persuaded, besought you, to do what? to trust in a God that cannot save? in one that has a name, but is infinitely beneath the eternal Nature? We ought to be afraid lest your faith should fix too low, and say as the Apostle did, *Ye men of Israel, why gaze ye on us, as tho' we by our own power and holiness had made this man to walk.* And so here, we should say, " 'Tis true, Christ  
" this Saviour was very pure in himself, and very  
" kind to you; you're to love him as a friend, and  
" admire him as the chiefest among ten thousand:  
" but take care that you do not love him with all  
" your heart, with all your mind, and with all  
" your strength. Remember the grace that he  
" gives, and the glory that he promises is not his  
" own: he's only the servant, and therefore all your  
" affections to him must be as much distinguish'd  
" from worship, as a creature is distinguish'd from  
" a God."

But,



But, as you know, we have never talk'd at this S E R M.  
XXXI.  
rate, so I am perswaded it would strike every serious person with horror if we should, who could take the pulpit to be no better than *the seat of the scornful*. And yet thus we must have preach'd, if we had maintain'd any consistence in our notions, or any honesty to our people. I should think it my duty, if I had been preaching never so long about the glorious nature of the Angels, and the innumerable offices of kindness they have done us, still to close all with a warning lest you should run into a *worshipping of Angels*. Now the danger would be greater, as Christ is more excellent than they; and therefore if he was not the proper object of our worship, we ought not to leave you in the snare.

5. This agrees to the nature of your dependence upon him. Our Gospel tells us, there is *salvation in no other*. And he himself said, *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*. So that our whole regard is collected to him. There's no putting him off with a share of it, but he must have it all. And will He, who is a jealous God, and has plainly told us, thou shalt have *no other gods before me*, suffer all this plunder from a creature? Tho' an Angel is a great deal better than a prince, yet I should sooner be admitted to trust in the latter than the former: for perhaps a vain foolish man would allow me in all the extravagance of my faith upon him; but an Angel would immediately say, *See thou, do it not*; and he must be very unworthy of the Divine favours to him if he did not so.

Now, if Christ Jesus is better than the Angels, and still a creature, I should expect more zeal from Him than from them against any misapplication of my faith and duty. He of all others would never say, *Look unto me, and be ye sav'd all the ends* Ila. xlv.

# 460 The Mystery of GODLINESS,

S E R M. of the earth, if he could not also say, *I am God, and*  
XXXI. *there is none else.* It was Lucifer's wickedness,

when he was made the Son of the morning, that he  
xiv. 12. would set his throne as the throne of God. The dig-  
nity of his nature was an aggravation of his crime;  
and so it would be in our blessed Lord. All his  
advancement above the Angels obliges him more  
than them to secure the Divine honour entire by  
taking none of it to himself.

6. This provides for all the comfort that we  
can stand in need of. We have it in Christ, who  
Joh. xiv. said, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:*

27. *not as the world gives give I unto you; In the world*  
xvi. 33. *ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall have peace.*

This peace and joy come in a way of believing;  
our faith upon him fetches it down: And can we  
think that a creature is able to do all this? When

Psal. David saith, *Strengthen me with strength in my*  
cxxxviii. *soul,* I cannot suppose but that he speaks of a Di-  
3. vine operation; something that none but a God  
can do. And do believers under the new Testa-

ment look any lower for their consolations than  
those under the old? The Psalmist could say, *Whom*

lxxiii. 25. *have I in heaven but Thee? my flesh and my heart*  
26. *fails; but GOD is the strength of my heart, and my*  
*portion for ever.* And have we One more in heaven  
besides him? Is ours a descending, a falling faith?

Does it come down from its chief object, and find  
a partner with God? Do you think when the A-

2 Tim. iv. postle saith, *The Lord stood by me, and strengthen'd*  
17. *me,* he means any less than that God, who was the  
strength of David's heart? A creature may pity

you, but a God, you're sure, is capable of helping  
1 Pet. i. 8. you. Now Christ is He, *whom having not seen, ye*  
*love, and in whom, tho' now ye see him not, yet be-*

*lieving, ye rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of*  
*glory.*

7. This

7. This gives us a better prospect of the future glory: *The end of your faith is the salvation of your souls.* When we tell you of heaven, and you hear that life and immortality are brought to light by the Gospel, it's Christ that must convey you thither: *I will come again, saith he, and receive you to myself, that where I am, ye may be also.* But how vain would it be to have this said of a creature? We find it hard enough to believe that *he is able to save to the uttermost*; but if he was not a God, those difficulties would increase upon us. Our faith stands in the Lord, and in the power of his might. S E R M.  
XXXI.  
ver. 9.  
Joh. xiv.  
3.  
Eph. vi.  
10.

We cannot tell but an Angel is mighty enough to carry our souls thro' the air into the region of spirits, as it's said they did that of *Lazarus*: but on purpose to let us see what we have to trust to, our expectations are fix'd a great deal higher. And when Christ saith, *I will receive you to myself*, I believe it's a promise equivalent to *David's* hope: *Thou wilt guide me by thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to thy glory.* Don't think that he under the old Testament had his dependence upon God, and that we in these better days have our faith and confidence in no more than a creature.

The application of this is what I have but little room for: I will therefore confine myself to these three particulars.

(1.) If it is GOD whom we preach to the Gentiles, a God manifest in the flesh, then you may be very sure we have no reason to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor ought you to be ashamed of those that are *his prisoners, but be partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God.* Not but that we are like to meet with the same reproach among Christians, that the Apostles did among the heathen. In preaching up 2 Tim. i.  
8.



S E R M. the Deity of Christ Jesus, some are ready now to  
XXXI. represent us as *setters forth of strange gods.*

Acts xvii.  
18.

Could we have been content to have shunn'd or amended the faith that was once deliver'd to the Saints, the enemy wou'd have had as little provocation as they have real ground for a volley of reproaches. We should never have been charg'd with setting up a human authority, or framing a court of *inquisition*, or depreciating the word of God. Men that depart from this doctrine, stand clear of these accusations, tho' it's known well enough their scheme will never do in the bare language of Scripture. They have leave to talk of an originated God, and an improper eternity, and use as many barbarous terms as they please, without any blame for departing from the words of the Bible. What plain passages are there in the way, which they are forc'd to work themselves thro' with distinctions and expositions? This liberty of explaining a notion in them is free thinking; but in us its laying aside *the form of sound words*. Well, my friends, the cause we are engag'd in is worth all this, and a thousand times more; for if it is a God whom we preach, we know he both can and will maintain his interest, and he will also own his servants who have own'd him: for such a one alone is *head over all things unto the church*, as he has *the fulness of him that fills all in all*.

(2.) Let us, upon this account, recommend ourselves to your friendship and hearty prayers. You see we are *set for the defence of the Gospel*. Reproaches flie about of an unusual kind, and from  
2Thes. iii. an unsuspected quarter: *Pray that we may be deliver'd from unreasonable and wicked men, for all men have not faith.* Suppose the enemy should prevail to stop our mouths, or pollute our integrity, and that you're brought to attend upon ministers,  
whose

whose prudence will not suffer 'em to tell you S E R M. XXXI.  
 that Christ is God; what would become of religion in your closets and your families? therefore suffer me to bespeak your kindness as the Apostle does :  
*Pray for us, that God would open to us a door of utterance to speak the mystery of Christ; for which I am also in bonds, that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak.* Col. iv. 3; 4.

(3.) It's from our preaching Christ as God, that we can have any hope that he is believ'd on in the world.

*The End of the first Volume.*





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